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# **The Experience of Colour in the Theatre of Federico García Lorca**

**Jade Leanne Jessie Boyd**

“A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies in the Faculty of Arts, School of Modern Languages, September 2019.”

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## **Abstract**

Colour in the theatre of Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) is a powerful and equivocal force which is centred on his aesthetic concerns and on the audience experience. Lorca's use of colour has long been a source of critical enquiry, yet the scholarly focus on traditional colour symbolism has largely occluded the material and affective nature of his colour-work. My aim in this thesis is to address that critical lacuna by demonstrating that Lorca's colour practice is integral to his experiments with a 'theatre of poetry'. This was his vision of a theatre which exposed the hidden suffering of his characters and sought to bring key themes and motifs from page to stage, creating an inclusive theatre of diverse influences which stimulated and challenged his audience. Within a framework of material, visual, literary, and cultural studies of colour, I analyse Lorca's ten completed, full-length dramas, which were finished between 1920 and 1936. I demonstrate the importance of colour in our understanding of Lorca's theatre of poetry and reveal how his colour practice and theatrical theory are interwoven throughout his theatre as a whole. I show how theories of affective and material colour offer a deeper understanding of Lorca's colour practice; I provide a methodology for considering the work of other Spanish writers in ways which exceed traditional symbolic recuperations; and I open up the field through this interdisciplinary thesis which mutually benefits Modern Language Studies, Colour Studies, and Theatre Studies.

## **Dedication and Acknowledgements**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Carrie Watt-Boyd and Steve Boyd, who made this dream possible with their emotional and financial support. This is also dedicated to my grandmother Patricia Watt, who graduated from the University of Bristol in 1976, paving the way for my own achievements here. Thank you to all my family and friends for your encouragement and support throughout this long academic journey.

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## **Author's Declaration**

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....

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## Introduction

### THESIS AIM

This thesis will argue that material colour is an underexplored and pervasive dimension of the stagecraft of Federico García Lorca (1898-1936). My study aims to explore how an analysis of Lorca's use of colour which exceeds symbolic readings offers a deeper understanding of what he called his 'theatre of poetry'. This was Lorca's vision of a holistic and multi-modal theatre which sought to create a visceral, active viewing experience.<sup>1</sup> It also aimed to reach all levels of the public and to embody key linguistic images and themes in the material staging. Drawing on theoretical engagement with colour, in the visual arts, in material culture, in literary criticism and in cultural studies, and on queer theory, my thesis will explore the following core questions in relation to Lorca's theatre of poetry: How does Lorca use colour to penetrate the surface of things and to communicate the complex emotional states of his characters? How do ideas surrounding colour capture the interplay between the visual and the verbal in Lorca's plays and his vision of a holistic theatrical experience? What role does colour play in Lorca's experimentation with abstract themes and ideas on the material stage? Through a close reading of Lorca's ten completed, full-length dramas, written between 1920 and 1936, I will argue that these ideas surrounding colour can offer a deeper understanding of Lorca's theatre of poetry, as they provide ways of addressing the emotional and material dimensions of his stagecraft.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout my thesis I will be working flexibly across the boundaries between the reader of the play text and the viewer of the performance.

<sup>2</sup> Due to the interdisciplinary nature of my study and my aim of moving beyond Hispanism and reaching a wider audience including colour studies and theatre studies, I will provide translations throughout my thesis.

## CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE FIELD

Symbolism dominates many readings of Lorca's colour-work. It forms the backbone of Gwynne Edwards's treatment of colour in his fundamental 1980 study *Lorca: The Theatre Beneath the Sand*. Whilst the importance of Edwards's reading of Lorca's theatre should not be underestimated as a primary starting point for a comprehensive analysis of Lorca's post-1930 plays, it does rely on traditional readings of colour symbolism in Lorca's work.<sup>3</sup> For Edwards, black constitutes old age, death, melancholy, and the negative elements of life; white is death, the passing of time, pain, frustration, sterility, but also the positive aspects of life; blue signifies encroaching death; pink is optimism and beauty; and green is hope, freshness, and vitality. Edwards's reading of blue light as evocative of a nightmare or as creating a dream-like effect is useful, but he concludes that ultimately blue light is the signifier of death, which narrows Lorca's colour-work down to a fixed meaning. Edwards's analysis of colour in *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) [The House of Bernarda Alba] is far more fruitful, suggesting that the uniform nature of the white house and its thick walls is indicative of their imprisonment and the monotony of their daily lives, an atmosphere which is reflected by references to heat, by Lorca's use of silence, and by the repetitive nature of the dialogue. The multiple and contrasting 'meanings' of colours discussed in Edwards's study calls into question the usefulness of traditional colour symbolism as a route of critical enquiry, especially if it is considered in isolation from its other functions.

Derek Harris's 1985 study of green in Lorca's work is marked by both his listing of colour frequencies and his focus on colour symbolism. Harris argues that Lorca's use of

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<sup>3</sup> Edwards considers the earlier plays *El maleficio*, *Mariana Pineda*, *La zapatera*, and *Don Perlimplín* to be 'minor works' and thus does not explore them in the same depth. See Gwynne Edwards, *The Theatre Beneath the Sand* (London: Boyars, 1980).



green undergoes a semantic shift from positive to negative connotations over time as ‘the conventional positive symbolism of green, its associations with hope and vitality, become subverted [...] so that a link is made between green and the experience of love and life denied’.<sup>4</sup> Harris suggests that the same shift from positive to negative meanings occurs in Lorca’s plays: green appears as symbol of nature in Lorca’s early works, becomes more menacing and negative in the late 1920s, and is consistently evocative of death in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> Harris’s analysis of green in Lorca’s plays is conspicuously brief, comprising a single paragraph which does not take the richness and variety of Lorca’s theatrical opus into account. Whilst Harris does consider that colour values may shift and change, he relies heavily on Lorca’s personal life and presumed emotional state as the driving force behind this transformation, and suggests that one reading can be applied to Lorca’s vast range of poetry and his ten completed plays. Harris’s failure to consider implicit colour and his reduction of the meanings of green to this linear trajectory from life to death leaves Lorca’s varied and remarkable use of colour unexplored beyond a cataloguing of explicit uses of green. Implicit colour is a crucial element of his stagecraft. This is when colour is implied by the object and may not be explicitly stated using colour-words. For example, blood is a pervasive motif in Lorca’s plays and is consistently associated with redness, yet the term ‘red’ may not be present. Any analysis which only focuses on Lorca’s use of colour terminology overlooks the vast range of implicit object colours in his theatre, such as (white) lilies, (yellow) quinces, and (green) emeralds.

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<sup>4</sup> Derek Harris, ‘Green Death: An Analysis of the Symbolism of the Colour Green in Lorca’s Poetry’, in *Readings in Spanish and Portuguese Poetry for Geoffrey Connell*, ed. by Nicholas Round and D. Gareth Walters (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Department of Hispanic Studies, 1985), pp. 80–97 (p. 93). We see this preoccupation with Lorca’s use of green in Robert Havard’s, Ryan Prout’s, and Francisco García Lorca’s studies in this chapter. ‘Verde que te quiero verde’, ‘green I want you green’ has become one of Lorca’s most famous lines and was the title of a 2016 anthology of poetry and prose. This collection is inspired by Lorca’s poetry and brings his unconventional, passionate ethos to current global concerns. See Natalie Peeterse (ed.), *Verde que te quiero verde: Poems after Federico García Lorca* (Helena, MT: Open County Press, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Harris, p. 94.

Harris's study highlights another key critical trend regarding Lorca's use of colour: the tendency to see colour as the manifestation of Lorca's own psyche and his sexual struggle. Whilst I acknowledge that Lorca's homosexuality, which was illegal in Spain at the time, will have been a factor in his work, we must be careful not to invest it with too much significance. Lorca was a complex, multi-faceted individual and the theme of homosexuality is not explicit in most of his work, as Federico Bonaddio tells us.<sup>6</sup> We cannot presume to know the workings of his mind. Even Lorca's interviews and letters have proved to be contradictory. Lorca's views on the politicism of his travelling theatre group La Barraca are a prime example.<sup>7</sup> Whilst queer studies can offer important insights into Lorca's work, as I will argue in my analysis of bodily colour in Chapter Three, we must be wary of considering his treatment of gender and sexuality as directly stemming from his own homosexuality. Robert Havard's 1972 article recognises the ambiguous nature of greenness in Lorca's work, yet also attributes this conflict to Lorca's own struggle with sexuality, reading green as the ambivalent symbol of the psychic conflict of the author.<sup>8</sup> Nelson Orringer takes a similar approach in his 1975 study of Lorca's poetry collection *Diván del Tamarit* (1934) [The Tamarit Divan], suggesting that its faded colour palette represents Lorca's haunting by erotic memories of failed love and a desire for self-destruction.<sup>9</sup> He argues that this poetry collection 'forms a mature self-portrait mostly in white and turbid gray [as] Lorca tortures himself with the despair to which memories of unfulfilling love have driven him'.<sup>10</sup> This psycho-biographical approach to Lorca continues in later studies. Ryan Prout's 2000 article argues that Lorca's

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<sup>6</sup> 'Lorca', *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 4 July 2019.

<sup>7</sup> For example, in 1931 Lorca suggests that La Barraca was 'muy preocupada con una gran idea política, que es la que les empuja', whilst in 1932 he insisted that 'no tiene tendencia política de ninguna clase: es simplemente teatro', *Prosa I*, in *Obras Completas VI*, ed. by Miguel García-Posada (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2008), p. 510 and p. 518. 'Very preoccupied with a grand political idea, which is what drives it', 'it doesn't have any political tendency at all: it's simply theatre'.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Havard, 'The Symbolic Ambivalence of "Green" in García Lorca and Dylan Thomas', *Modern Language Review*, 67 (1972), 810–19.

<sup>9</sup> Throughout my thesis the dates of works indicate when they were written, as the publication and/or performance of many of Lorca's works was sometimes delayed significantly.

<sup>10</sup> Nelson R. Orringer, 'Absence of Color: Its Erotic Connotations in the *Diván del Tamarit*', *García Lorca Review*, 3.1-2 (1975), 57–66 (p. 63).

synaesthetic use of blue and green in his poetry collection *Poeta en Nueva York* (1929) [Poet in New York] signifies an identification of sexual difference and sexual minority, and the resulting stigma.<sup>11</sup> For Prout, the possibilities of a synaesthetic reading of colour, where the visual and non-visual senses become blended, is reduced to ‘the interaction between sensory perception, memory, and emotion’ sparked by Lorca’s personal response to his time in the United States.<sup>12</sup> Emilio Peral Vega’s 2015 monograph *Pierrot/Lorca: White Carnival of Black Desire* is also concerned with Lorca’s personal sexuality. Whilst the Pierrot is an important recurring figure in Lorca’s drawings, poetry, and plays, Peral Vega’s reading of the Pierrot figure as an ‘aesthetic encoding’ of Lorca’s homosexuality and the ‘spokesperson for his dark side’ reduces the study of white and black to the staining of the white, pure, virginal, effeminate figure of the Pierrot with the black taint of masculinity and Lorca’s ‘dark love’.<sup>13</sup> Scholarship which focuses on Lorca’s colour-work as the expression of his personal sexuality is in danger of reducing his rich use of colour to one reading and assuming a personal subjective knowledge of the author which we cannot confirm with any certainty.

In addition to the focus on colour symbolism and on Lorca’s homosexuality, a third trend is the recognition of the visual nature of his use of verbal colour in his poetry. In his 1944 study *García Lorca as a Painter*, Gregorio Prieto, a contemporary and acquaintance of Lorca, argues that Lorca’s work is dominated by his visual practice and his ‘secret love’ of painting.<sup>14</sup> Whilst Prieto does consider the plays *Mariana Pineda* (1925) and *Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje de las flores* (1935) [Doña Rosita the Spinster and the Language of

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<sup>11</sup> Ryan Prout, ‘Greenery Blues: Synaesthesia, Landscape and Lorca’s Lassitude in Vermont’, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 77.3 (2000), 393–411.

<sup>12</sup> Prout, p. 407.

<sup>13</sup> Emilio Peral Vega, *Pierrot/Lorca: White Carnival of Black Desire* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2015), p. 3 and p. 140. See also Sarah Wright’s discussion of the clown and harlequin figures in *Así que pasen años*. Wright argues that their ‘visual androgyny’ and their various masks suggest that these characters represent ‘a liminal realm prior to division and difference’. This pre-gender state is reinforced in Lorca’s depiction of the Second Friend. This character can be played by a male or female actor, as Lorca tells us in the stage directions, and their white suit is ‘evocative of the Pierrot’, *The Trickster Function in the Theatre of Federico García Lorca* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2000), pp. 92–93.

<sup>14</sup> Gregorio Prieto, *García Lorca as a Painter* (London: Alexander Moring, 1944), p. 7.

Flowers], he focuses only on the ballad of the bullfight and the mutable rose poem respectively, considering these extracts as individual poems rather than as part of a holistic theatrical work. Prieto contends that Lorca's use of colour in his poetry evokes at different times the plastic effects of Impressionism, water-colour, oil-painting, charcoal, chiaroscuro, and the works of Velázquez, Zurbarán, and Rembrandt. In this analysis Prieto also acknowledges the role of implicit colour to some extent, such as the redness implied by references to blood. However, he also takes a quantitative approach, listing instances of green in 'Romance sonámbulo' (1927) [Sleepwalking Ballad]. Prieto believes that Lorca has 'favourite colours' and relies heavily on colour having set meanings, telling us that 'the poet uses white to express his happiest visions [...] On the other hand when black rises in his poetry it is an unsurmountable wall of sadness, pain and crime'.<sup>15</sup> Prieto's reading of the role of colour in the viscosity of the poetic text introduces a useful line of enquiry that can spur us to open up Lorca's hybridity as an artist and his blurring of genre and media, rather than merely as evidence of a love of painting as Prieto suggests. However, the critic's focus on set colour meanings and explicit instances of colour, and his treatment of sections of Lorca's plays as distinct poetic pieces, fail to offer a comprehensive understanding of Lorca's colour-work.

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<sup>15</sup> Prieto, pp. 8–9 and p. 11. For a discussion of Lorca's visual practice see also Helen Oppenheimer, *Lorca: The Drawings. Their Relation to the Poet's Life and Work* (London: The Herbert Press, 1986); Cecilia J. Cavanaugh, *Lorca's Drawings and Poems: Forming the Eye of the Reader* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995); and Federico Bonaddio and Jacqueline Cockburn, 'Drawing', in *A Companion to Federico García Lorca*, ed. by Federico Bonaddio (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2010), pp. 84–100. Lorca expressed his detailed views on modern art in his 1928 lecture 'Sketch de la nueva pintura' [Sketch of the New Painting]. Lorca sees Cubism as a 'Perseus' rescuing painting from the death throes of Impressionism where 'la naturaleza es torpemente imitada en su gama de colores', (*Prosa I*, p. 269). 'Nature is clumsily imitated in its range of colours.' In contrast, modern painting frees colour from the chains of realism: 'El color y el volumen en la pintura histórica estaban al servicio del retrato, del cuadro religioso, etc, etc.; en la pintura moderna color y volumen empiezan, ¡por vez primera en el mundo!, a vivir sus propios sentimientos y a comunicarse y entrelazarse sobre el lienzo obedeciendo a leyes dictadas por sus esencias [...] Es la pintura la que grita, la que afirma y la que conmueve al mundo [...] lleva sangre caliente en el seno', (*Prosa I*, pp. 270–71). 'Colour and volume in historic painting were at the service of the portrait, the religious painting, etc, etc.; in modern painting colour and volume begin, for the first time in the world!, to live their own feelings and to communicate and intertwine themselves on the canvas obeying laws dictated by their essences. It is painting which shouts, which affirms and which moves the world [...] hot blood pumps in its chest'. These allusions to 'grita' and 'sangre' remind us of Lorca's description of his theatre of poetry, which I discuss later in this chapter.

María del Carmen Hernández Valcárcel's discussion of Lorca's poetry in *La expresión sensorial en cinco poetas del 27* (1978) [Sensorial Expression in Five Poets of the 27] explores the visual sensations which Lorca captures through colour language. Although Hernández Valcárcel does draw on colour symbolism and list frequencies of colour, her identification of five different uses of colour, primarily in *Canciones* (1924) [Songs], *Primeras canciones* (1934) [First Songs], and *Romancero gitano* (1927) [Gypsy Ballads], is much more fruitful as it emphasises the other aspects of colour in Lorca's poetry. These are, for Hernández Valcárcel: colour as a qualifier or adjective; colour as displacement, where the object it refers to shifts in the poem; emblematic or symbolic colour; the materialisation of colour in the form of objects and colour associations; and the personification of colours as well as shadows, light, and other cosmic phenomena.<sup>16</sup> She also explores the implicit colour created by material objects which is a critical aspect of Lorca's colour-work. She argues that the apparent chromatic scarcity which Guillermo Díaz-Plaja identifies in the poetry collection *Romancero gitano* is due to 'la supresión casi total del epíteto y de calificativos cromáticos'.<sup>17</sup> Instead, 'el color es sustituido por otro término que [...] [sugiere] una tonalidad determinada'.<sup>18</sup> She draws our attention to Lorca's use of metals, minerals, and flowers in this work, concluding that 'el color late bajo esta pobre cobertura, envuelto en metáforas y símbolos admirables que proporcionan una coloración velada, pero muy rica, a los poemas'.<sup>19</sup> She notes that these implicit colours are also important in Lorca's other poetry collections in the predominant motifs of blood, flowers, precious metals, and gems. However,

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<sup>16</sup> María del Carmen Hernández Valcárcel, 'Federico García Lorca', in *La expresión sensorial en cinco poetas del 27* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1978), pp. 197–248. Hernández Valcárcel's study also explores the poetry of Pedro Salinas, Jorge Guillén, Dámaso Alonso, and Rafael Alberti. She argues that the senses were an integral part of the poetic output of this literary 'generation' and suggests that these writers create a sensory richness which 'tal vez no se lograba en la poesía española desde la sensual literatura barroca de nuestros Siglos de Oro', (p. 6). 'Has perhaps not been achieved in Spanish poetry since the sensual Baroque literature of our Golden Ages'.

<sup>17</sup> Hernández Valcárcel, p. 232. 'The almost total suppression of the epithet or chromatic qualifiers'.

<sup>18</sup> Hernández Valcárcel, p. 233. 'Colour is substituted by another term which [...] [suggests] a particular colour-scheme'.

<sup>19</sup> Hernández Valcárcel, p. 234. 'Colour beats beneath this poor covering, wrapped up in admirable metaphors and symbols which provide a hidden, but very rich, colouring in his poems'.

her study sees Lorca's poetry as falling into two distinct linear trajectories comprised of *Libro de poemas* (1920) [Book of Poems], *Canciones*, and *Primeras canciones* in contrast to *Poema del cante jondo*, *Romancero gitano*, and *Poeta en Nueva York*, despite her own identification of the importance of implicit floral colours across at least four of these volumes. She also views *Poeta en Nueva York* as 'una sorprendente colección de poemas totalmente distintos de [su] poesía anterior', failing to consider how these poems engage with colour motifs that she has already identified, such as the implicit redness of blood.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, whilst she considers the synaesthetic role of colour in Lorca's poems, including the imbrication of colour and sound in *Poema del cante jondo* (1921) [Poem of the Deep Song], this is an undeveloped line of enquiry and she neglects the effects of these portrayals beyond symbolic observations. Despite these shortcomings, Hernández Valcárcel's identification of the role of implicit colour in Lorca's poetry is an important starting point. The issue of implicit colour is vital in terms of Lorca's theatre as we must bear in mind that on stage every material object will have a colour. I will take forward this reading of implicit colour in my discussion of Lorca's theatre in order to counteract the emphasis on explicit colour references and to address the importance of object colour, which is the focus of my analysis in Chapter Four.

Veronica Dean-Thacker and Pedro Guerrero Ruíz's *Federico García Lorca: El color de la poesía* (1998) [Federico García Lorca: The Colour of Poetry] builds on Hernández Valcárcel's work in their exploration of the role of colour and the plastic, descriptive, and symbolic aspects of what they call Lorca's 'visualidad poética'.<sup>21</sup> Whilst Dean-Thacker and Guerrero Ruíz do engage with colour symbolism – red as love and passion; black as death, pain, and grief; white as life, pain, and death; blue as Modernist – they acknowledge the vast

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<sup>20</sup> Hernández Valcárcel, p. 242. 'A surprising collection of poems which are totally different to his previous poetry'.

<sup>21</sup> Veronica Dean-Thacker and Pedro Guerrero Ruíz, *Federico García Lorca: El color de la poesía* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1998), p. 17. 'Poetic visuality'.

sensory complexity of these symbols. Dean-Thacker and Guerrero Ruíz also recognise the diachronic development of Lorca's opus, although disappointingly they still read *Poeta en Nueva York* as entirely distinct from Lorca's other poetry collections. Dean-Thacker and Guerrero Ruíz's reading of colour as a sensory, luminous, and mobile force offers a useful starting point, as does their exploration of Lorca's use of abstraction and the blending of the real and unreal, his playful use of language, and his colour word games. However, their focus on how Lorca uses these colour images to reflect his inner reality and his relationship with the world often leads to a restrictive symbolic analysis. Their argument that Lorca's poetry displays 'una intertextualidad visivo-lírica [...] que descodifica la multicolor paleta de su destino' often reduces these chromatic effects to 'la sobreposición de los sentimientos del poeta, en un estudio de sensaciones diversas'.<sup>22</sup> Despite the useful aspects of Lorca's colour-work that Dean-Thacker and Guerrero Ruíz identify, their subjective, biographical focus detracts from these more productive and still underexplored lines of enquiry.

Francisco García Lorca's 1972 essay on 'Romance sonámbulo' offers a much more productive consideration of colour, especially his analysis of his brother's famous line 'verde que te quiero verde'.<sup>23</sup> Francisco suggests that the first 'verde' is a noun and that Lorca is addressing the colour directly, with the second instance being the adjectival property of greenness. He sees two aspects to this core phrase comprising the push-and-pull between two impulses throughout the poem: 'un acto de reconocimiento' (an appreciation of the greenness

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<sup>22</sup> Dean-Thacker and Guerrero Ruíz, p. 93 and p. 52. 'A visual-lyrical intertextuality [...] which decodes the multicolour palette of his destiny', 'the superimposition of the poet's feelings, on a study of diverse sensations'. Dean-Thacker and Guerrero Ruíz take their reading of blue as indicative of Modernism from Hernández Valcárcel's study. Hernández Valcárcel does not specify the reasons for this correlation but her allusion to Rubén Darío, who is widely considered as the 'father' of Spanish American Modernism, suggests that she may be referring to the influence of Darío's poetry and short story collection *Azul...* (1888) [Blue].

<sup>23</sup> 'Green I want you green'.

of green), and ‘un acto creador’ (the expression of a desire for green to become green).<sup>24</sup> This may be a green which does not yet exist: ‘la idea misma del verde aún no creado’.<sup>25</sup> For Francisco, this poem is not about what green ‘means’. He argues that the work ceases to be about ‘why green?’ as ‘la reiteración del verso le ordeña el significado hasta dejarlo vacío; como en la frase del obseso’.<sup>26</sup> The answer to the puzzle is that there is no solution; this is a word game through colour which ends only in mystery, reminding Francisco of another word game his brother played: ‘La una era la otra y la dos eran ninguna’.<sup>27</sup> Throughout his essay, Francisco recognises the complexity and depth of Lorca’s writing and the multiple, shifting facets of his colour-work.

Whilst C. B. Morris’s reading of colour in *Bodas de sangre* (1932) [Blood Wedding] regularly draws on colour symbolism – yellow as ‘marriage and fertility’, pink as ‘delicacy and tender beauty’, blue and green as death, and white as ‘virginal’ – he also engages with colour as a visual device which links or separates characters and events, acknowledges the plethora of implicit colour images in the play, and recognises the ambiguous nature of these

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<sup>24</sup> Francisco García Lorca, ‘Verde’, in *De Garcilaso a Lorca* (Colombia and Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 1984), pp. 267–73 (p. 268). ‘An act of recognition’, ‘a creative act’. This collection of essays, which were published posthumously, includes discussions of reality and character names in *Don Quijote*, of Góngora’s poetry, and of another of Lorca’s poem from *Romancero gitano*, ‘Preciosa y el aire’ [Precious and the Air]. See also Francisco’s memoirs of life with his brother *Federico y su mundo (de Fuente Vaqueros a Madrid)*, 2nd edn (Madrid: Alianza, 1981). In an interview in 1980, Mario Hernández, who collated this work for posthumous publication, described Francisco’s own artistic aspirations and involvement in the literary world of early-twentieth-century Spain: ‘Francisco, como su hermano, «militó» en la renovación literaria de aquella época, publicó algunos poemas juveniles, fue director de la revista Gallo, mantuvo una cordialísima amistad con Falla, escribió una novela que Federico encomió enormemente en una carta a Guillén, tuvo amistad con Prados, Altolaguirre, Buñuel, Manuel Angeles Ortiz, Joaquín Peinado, etcétera. Aunque él procedía de las aulas de Derecho (con más seria dedicación en este terreno que su hermano), no por ello dejó de participar, aun distante, de aquella efervescencia creadora’. José Miguel Ullan, ‘*Federico y su mundo*, un libro hasta ahora inédito de Francisco García Lorca’, *El País*, 10 July 1980 <[https://elpais.com/diario/1980/07/10/cultura/332028009\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/1980/07/10/cultura/332028009_850215.html)> [accessed 11 September 2019]. ‘Francisco, like his brother, was “militant” in the literary renovation of that period, he published some juvenile poems, he was director of *Gallo* magazine, he maintained a very cordial friendship with Falla, he wrote a novel which Federico praised enormously in a letter to Guillén, he was friends with Prados, Altolaguirre, Buñuel, Manuel Angeles Ortiz, Joaquín Peinado, etcetera. Although he came from the classrooms of Law (with a more serious dedication in this field than his brother), this did not keep him from that creative effervescence, however distant it was’.

<sup>25</sup> Francisco García Lorca, p. 271. ‘The idea of a green not yet created’.

<sup>26</sup> Francisco García Lorca, p. 272. ‘The reiteration of the verse demands a meaning until it leaves it empty; like a phrase of someone obsessed’.

<sup>27</sup> Francisco García Lorca, p. 272. ‘One was the other and both were neither’.



colour symbols.<sup>28</sup> Morris concedes that ‘a colour cannot have a single meaning’ and that Lorca ‘exploited the ambivalence of colours and our diverse responses to them’.<sup>29</sup> Rather than ‘a simple code’, Lorca’s meticulous use of colour allows us to make connections between ‘place and place, person and person, place and person’.<sup>30</sup> However, like Derek Harris in his study of green across Lorca’s work as a whole, Morris sees the various colours in *Bodas de sangre* as indicative of a linear trajectory from associations of life to values of death, arguing that the ‘deliberate ambivalence [of the colour symbols] allows us to ponder on life and death and on the speed with which the first yields to the second’.<sup>31</sup> Morris’s discussion of colour and space is more fruitful. He suggests that the different colours of the Mother’s, Wife’s, and Bride’s houses – yellow, pink, and white with pink and blue accents respectively – ‘separates the three homes in the mind of the spectator’ and captures the ‘emotional and physical gulf’ between the characters in visual form.<sup>32</sup> In contrast, the ‘chromatic link’ which Morris sees between the blue jars in the Bride’s house and the ‘*azules fríos*’ of its exterior (p. 365), the blue light in the forest scene, and the dark blue dresses of the two girls in the final scene is less productive, as he argues that this use of blue serves to associate the Bride with death, restricting this colour-work to fixed symbolic readings.<sup>33</sup> The ways in which Morris traces certain colours in the play is more useful as he recognises the wealth of implicit object colour in the work, particularly those found in the motifs of flowers, blood, and fire. The redness of blood and the corporeal whiteness of the Bride are a central

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<sup>28</sup> C. B. Morris, *García Lorca: Bodas de sangre* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1996), p. 46, p. 48, and p. 55.

<sup>29</sup> Morris, *Bodas de sangre*, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> Morris, *Bodas de sangre*, p. 46.

<sup>31</sup> Morris, *Bodas de sangre*, p. 46.

<sup>32</sup> Morris, *Bodas de sangre*, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Cold blues’. The full description of the scene is as follows: ‘*Exterior de la cueva de la novia. Entonación en blancos grises y azules fríos. Grandes chumberas. Tonos sombríos y plateados. Panorama de mesetas color barquillo, todo endurecido como paisaje de cerámica popular* (p. 365)’. ‘The outside of the Bride’s cave. White-grey and cold blue tones. Tall prickly pear cacti. Gloomy and silvery tones. Panorama of wafer-coloured benches, everything hardened like a landscape of popular ceramic’. This highly stylised set reminds us of the multi-modal nature of Lorca’s craft as it evokes pottery, which also invests this scene with unusual haptic values reflecting the hardness of the arid land. The specificity of this depiction – white greys, cold blues, shadowy and silvery tones, wafer-coloured – is representative of Lorca’s meticulous colour practice as he conjures up specific colours, tones, and intensities.

part of my exploration of bodily colour in *Bodas de sangre* in Chapter Three, and I extend this analysis to consider the more subtle colours implied by images of wounding in the dialogue of the Bride and the Mother. Whilst Morris's study stresses the importance of colour in *Bodas de sangre* as an ambivalent and pervasive force, what is needed is a reading of Lorca's use of colour in this play which does not rely so heavily on colour symbolism and on an overarching narrative which restricts Lorca's colour-work to a linear trajectory towards death.

The current state of Lorca colour scholarship thus reveals a preoccupation with colour symbolism; a focus on his poetry, especially green in 'Romance sonámbulo'; a concern with his personal sexuality or inner world; and a neglect of implicit colour, which Hernández Valcárcel begins to address in terms of Lorca's poetry but which needs to be considered in greater depth in relation to his plays. The limitations of a symbolic reading of Lorca's colour-work have also led to a focus on other elements of Lorca's stagecraft in canonical studies of Lorca's theatre by Paul Julian Smith (1998), Sarah Wright (2000), and Paul McDermid (2007).<sup>34</sup> Although colour remains largely absent from these core studies, these critics have explored other important aspects of Lorca's theatre which have proved instrumental to my thesis. In his study, Smith probes the 'historical, commercial, and ideological conditions of García Lorca's "production"' in *Yerma* (1934), *Bodas de sangre*, *Así que pasen cinco años* (1931) [When Five Years Pass], and *El público* (1930) [The Public].<sup>35</sup> Smith's discussions are guided by Freud's theories and by key intertexts including the sexual theories of Lorca's friend and contemporary Gregorio Marañón, Langston Hughes's translation of *Bodas de sangre* and his play *Mulatto* (1935), André Gide's exploration of masculinity and homosexuality in the novel *Corydon* (1924), and Lluís Pasqual's 1987 production of *El*

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<sup>34</sup> See Paul Julian Smith, *The Theatre of García Lorca: Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Wright, *The Trickster Function*; and Paul McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity in the Theatre of Federico García Lorca* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, p. 3.

*público*. Smith's readings of these plays are also situated in a particular place and time: 1930s Spain, 1930s Broadway, 1950s and 1960s France, and 1980s Spain respectively. I draw on Smith's discussions of maternity in *Yerma* and of the eroticised male body in *Bodas de sangre* in Chapter Three. In her monograph, Wright explores the importance of the liminal, equivocal trickster figure in Lorca's works within wider discussions of 'theatre, sexuality and subjectivity at the margins'.<sup>36</sup> Wright problematizes Lorca's portrayal of gender through discussions of femininity in *Amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (1925) [The Love of Don Perlimplín with Belisa in his Garden], masculinity in *Así que pasen*, and androgyny in *Así que pasen*, *Bodas de sangre*, and *El público*, revealing sexuality to be an ambivalent and performative force in his theatre. Lorca's multi-faceted portrayal of gender is central to my discussion of bodily colour and of the characters' emotional pain in Chapter Three. Wright's analysis of Belisa as a femme fatale in *Don Perlimplín* and of the vulnerable body in *El público* also nourishes my discussion in that chapter.

The questions which Wright raises regarding the 'dialectic between surface and depth' in *Don Perlimplín* and her argument that femininity in this play may be a mask, a hollow erotic construct, are conflated with the 'whiteness' of Belisa's body by McDermid in his reading of the play.<sup>37</sup> McDermid proposes that Belisa is an empty, sugar-coated white shell, a 'blank sheet' that is transformed by Perlimplín's love and by his sacrifice as he grants Belisa a soul.<sup>38</sup> Material whiteness is a core part of McDermid's exploration of love, desire, and identity in *Cristo: Una tragedia religiosa* (c. 1919-1920, unpublished juvenilia) [Christ: A Religious Tragedy], *Mariana Pineda*, and *Don Perlimplín*, especially in terms of character transformations and their movement from an earthy to a celestial plane. McDermid's

<sup>36</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 52. For Wright, femininity in *Don Perlimplín* is a masquerade as Belisa is represented in purely visual terms: 'she becomes a spectacle, unknown, gazed at from afar' and is the object of Perlimplín's voyeurism. Furthermore, Belisa becomes associated with the motif of the veil or 'the quest to discover the feminine' which 'has the effect of rendering Belisa two-dimensional, a construct, a mask of femininity', (*The Trickster Function*, p. 50 and p. 52).

<sup>38</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 81. See pp. 79–84 for his full discussion.

discussion of *Mariana Pineda* inspires my exploration of the whiteness of Mariana's body and costume in Chapter Three. I also extend these ideas of the white, moribund female body and the trope of material fading to my readings of the Butterfly in *El maleficio de la mariposa* (1920) [The Butterfly's Evil Spell] and Rosita in *Doña Rosita* in that same chapter. There is scope to take this fruitful discussion of whiteness further in order to explore the function of material colour in Lorca's theatre as a whole, above all in relation to his theatre of poetry. Inspired by these central works, I use these important ideas regarding gender, characterisation, and materiality to move away from the highly subjective symbolic and biographical lines of enquiry which dominate current Lorca colour scholarship. My thesis aims to explore the affective and material capacities of colour in Lorca's theatre which have been underexamined, especially the difference between verbal colour (in the dialogue) and visual colour (in the stage directions) and his use of implicit object colour rather than explicit colour terms. I will not reject colour symbolism, but will take it as part of the much more complex and diverse vision of Lorca's theatre of poetry.

## LORCA'S THEATRE OF POETRY

The central argument of my thesis is that Lorca's engagement with the material and affective power of colour in his plays forms a core part of his 'theatre of poetry'. For Lorca, poetry and theatre were not separate. He consistently referred to himself as 'el poeta', including in the title page of *Bernarda Alba*, and *Yerma* and *Doña Rosita* are subtitled as '[un] poema trágico' and '[un] poema granadino' respectively.<sup>39</sup> He also referred to *El público* as 'un poema para

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<sup>39</sup> 'A tragic poem', 'a Granadan poem'. Lorca's use of 'poeta' to refer to his role as dramatist is reflective of the Spanish Golden Age tradition of referring to the playwright as 'poeta' in contrast to the 'autor de comedias' who had more of a business manager role. Lorca's use of 'poeta' draws our attention to the subordination of authorial creation to commercial interests, as well as pointing to his concept of theatre of poetry.

silbarlo', prioritising his theatre of poetry over the practicalities of staging.<sup>40</sup> Whilst Edwards traces the presence of verse in Lorca's theatre in his 1980 study, Lorca stated in 1935 that 'el verso no quiere decir poesía en el teatro'.<sup>41</sup> Rather, theatre of poetry comprises a focus on the inner reality of everyday, ordinary people and the materialisation of poetic themes and symbols on stage, drawing on multi-modal and hybrid forms and styles. These ideas drive my discussion of colour as the material representation of mental states in *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two, my analysis of a somatic discourse of emotional suffering in *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma* in Chapter Three and *Doña Rosita* in Chapter Four, and my exploration of poetry 'made flesh' in my examination of bodily colour in Chapter Three, and of the colours of sets, props, lighting, and costumes in Chapter Four. Throughout my thesis I will demonstrate how Lorca's engagement with colour sheds light on these central ideas about theatre.

Lorca's theatre of poetry was an artistic rejection of the bourgeois, slice-of-life theatre and commercialism which dominated the Spanish stage at the time. Edwards observes that theatre in Spain in the first two decades of the twentieth century 'presented a spectacle of almost unrelieved superficiality' and was dominated by 'dramatists who, on the whole, gave an undiscerning public what it wanted, and a public which would not tolerate serious or experimental plays'.<sup>42</sup> Lorca makes clear his anti-bourgeois, anti-traditionalist vision in the prologue to *La zapatera prodigiosa* (1926) [The Shoemaker's Wonderful Wife] where the Author laments the playwright's fear of his audience and the subsequent disappearance of

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<sup>40</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 630. 'A poem to be booed at'.

<sup>41</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 678. 'Verse does not mean poetry in the theatre'.

<sup>42</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 10.

‘poetry’, in the form of surreal or unexpected transformations, from the stage.<sup>43</sup> He reiterates these concerns in his lecture ‘Charla sobre el teatro’ [Talk about Theatre] in 1935, where he argued that theatre needed to move away from commercialism and bourgeois audience demands: ‘El teatro se debe imponer al público y no el público al teatro’.<sup>44</sup> In a letter to his family in 1929 Lorca writes: ‘todo lo que existe ahora en España está muerto. O se cambia el teatro de raíz o se acaba para siempre. No hay otra solución’.<sup>45</sup> Theatre of poetry was his solution, an anti-realist theatre of depth and emotion which often developed surprising, oneiric dimensions:

El teatro es la poesía que se levanta del libro y se hace humana. Y al hacerse humana, habla y grita, llora y se desespera. El teatro necesita que los personajes que aparezcan en la escena lleven un traje de poesía y al mismo tiempo que se les vean los huesos, la sangre. Han de ser tan humanos, tan horrorosamente trágicos y ligados a la vida y al

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<sup>43</sup> Andrew Anderson observes how Lorca uses the prologue in *La zapatera* to draw attention to the theatrical nature of the piece and to stress that what we are seeing is not real life: ‘Coming at the very beginning, the prologue is part of the play as a whole but not part of the main dramatic action: it is manifestly a framing device, used to introduce certain ideas and above all, given its intermediate and mediatory status, to emphasize strongly that all that is to follow is none other than theatre, fiction and make-believe’, *García Lorca: La zapatera prodigiosa* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1991), p. 63. In her study, Wright explores the role of the prologue character as a trickster figure in *La zapatera*, puppet play *Retablillo de Don Cristóbal*, and unfinished plays *Dragón* and *Comedia sin título*. She argues that the Author/Director/Poet ‘is a trickster figure whose function is to open a dramatic dialogue with the audience, and [...] to lead them into the liminal space which is theatre’. The ‘cape of stars’ which the Author wears in the prologue of *La zapatera* invests him with the qualities of a magician, he is ‘at once powerful creator of images and mere showman’ and sets up ‘the dichotomy between false illusion and magic power’ which also pervades theatre, (*The Trickster Function*, p. 13 and p.17). When Lorca played the role of the Author in the premiere, he wore a long cape covered in stars which, along with the top hat described in the same directions that emits green light and a jet of water, enhances his magician-like appearance. In an interview in 1930 Lorca stated ‘El prólogo lo digo yo... Esto es cosa mía... Debo compartir la zozobra del estreno como autor y como actor... Con una gran capa llena de estrellas...’, (*Prosa I*, p. 497). ‘I deliver the prologue... That’s mine... I should share the anxiety of the premiere as the author and an actor... With a long cape of stars...’

<sup>44</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 429. ‘Theatre should impose itself on the audience, not the audience on theatre’.

<sup>45</sup> Federico García Lorca, *Prosa 2*, in *Obras Completas VII*, ed. by Miguel García-Posada (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2008), p. 1090. ‘Everything that exists right now in Spain is dead. Either we change theatre at its very roots or it ends forever. It’s that simple’.

día con una fuerza tal, que muestren sus traiciones, que se aprecien sus olores y que salga a los labios toda la valentía de sus palabras llenas de amor o de ascos.<sup>46</sup>

These ‘characters of bones-and-blood’ stood in direct opposition to ‘[los] personajes huecos, vacíos totalmente’ of established, middle-brow theatre.<sup>47</sup> Rather, Lorca sought to expose ‘el nervio [y] el alma’ through a visceral, bodily exploration of emotional pain.<sup>48</sup> In ‘Charla sobre el teatro’ he suggested: ‘el teatro que no recoge el latido social, el latido histórico, el drama de sus gentes y el color genuino de su paisaje y de su espíritu, con risa o con lágrimas, no tiene derecho a llamarse teatro’.<sup>49</sup> Lorca’s ability to capture the raw emotions of his characters and the effects of individual oppression has contributed to the longevity of his work. One aspect of his theatre of poetry is the search for truth and the desire to penetrate the surface of things and expose the bones and blood underneath. The other dimension to this idea of these almost unbearably human characters of flesh-and-blood is the creation of a poetic message which is universal; Lorca tells us that ‘el teatro no es ni puede ser otra cosa que emoción y poesía, en la palabra, en la acción y en el gesto’.<sup>50</sup> What Wright calls Lorca’s emotional ‘communion’ with the audience forms part of Lorca’s idea of *duende* which he described in his 1933 lecture ‘Teoría y Juego del Duende’ [Theory and Game of the *Duende*].<sup>51</sup> For Lorca, *duende* was the spirit of artistic creation captured in the experience of live flamenco music. María Delgado describes *duende* as a gut emotion sparked by the

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<sup>46</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 730. ‘Theatre is poetry which gets up off the page and becomes human. And as it does so, it speaks and shouts, it weeps and despairs. Theatre requires the characters that appear on stage to wear a suit of poetry and at the same time to let us see their bones, their blood. They have to be so human, so horrifyingly tragic and linked to life, to the moment, with such force, that their betrayals are revealed, their smells assault us and their lips pour forth all the bravura of their words full of love or revulsion’.

<sup>47</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 730. ‘The hollow, totally empty characters’.

<sup>48</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 497. ‘The nerve [and] the soul’.

<sup>49</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 428. ‘Theatre which does not capture the social heartbeat, the historic heartbeat, the drama of its people and the genuine colour of its landscape and its spirit, with laughter or with tears, does not have the right to call itself theatre’.

<sup>50</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 613. ‘Theatre is not nor cannot be anything but emotion and poetry, in word, in action, and in gesture’.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Lorca’, *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 4 July 2019.

ephemerality of performance or ‘the thrill of the live’.<sup>52</sup> The ways in which Lorca captures the toxic effects of social norms and rigid gender roles on individuals offer a searing criticism of honour, marriage, and motherhood through the visceral suffering of the Bride, Yerma, Rosita, and Bernarda’s daughters.

Theatre of poetry was a theatre for and about the everyday person, part of an attempt to ‘devolver el teatro al pueblo’.<sup>53</sup> This was also the driving force behind his work with travelling university theatre company La Barraca, which Lorca directed along with Eduardo Ugarte from 1931 until 1935.<sup>54</sup> Benjamín Palencia, Santiago Ontañón, and José Caballero designed the sets; Lorca would later work with Ontañón and Caballero on the designs for his own plays. With La Barraca, Lorca sought to bring popular, relatable performances of Golden Age Spanish theatre to the general public in more remote and rural areas of Spain. Lorca was also an avid supporter of El Club Teatral Anfistora, originally El Club Teatral de Cultura, an experimental theatre group founded by Pura Ucelay, María Martínez Sierra, and María Rodrigo as part of a feminine cultural club Asociación de Cultura Cívica.<sup>55</sup> Lorca and Ontañón were both members of the club and involved in its renaming. When he was asked about the club’s mission after their joint staging of *La zapatera* and *Don Perlimplín* in 1933, Lorca responded ‘hacer arte. Pero arte al alcance de todo el mundo’.<sup>56</sup> Lorca prioritised the popular audience as part of his anti-bourgeois ethos: ‘Yo arrancaría de los teatros las plateas y los palcos y traería abajo el gallinero. En el teatro hay que dar entrada al público de

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<sup>52</sup> ‘Lorca’, *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 4 July 2019.

<sup>53</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 575. ‘Return the theatre to the people’.

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of Lorca’s work with La Barraca see Suzanne Wade Byrd, *García Lorca: “La Barraca” and the Spanish National Theater* (New York: Abrad Ediciones, 1975). José Pérez Doménech’s 1933 interview with co-founder Eduardo Ugarte is particularly interesting as Ugarte reveals a political drive which Lorca had tried to avoid, as I explored earlier. Ugarte states: ‘Lo considero [la política] como un aspecto simple del teatro en general; como una dimensión más del teatro’, (*Prosa I*, p. 538). ‘I consider [politics] as a simple aspect of theatre in general; another of theatre’s dimensions’.

<sup>55</sup> María Martínez Sierra has been subsequently revealed as the true author of many of husband Gregorio Martínez Sierra’s plays. See Susan Kirkpatrick’s chapter on María Martínez Sierra in *Mujer, modernismo y vanguardia en España: 1898-1931* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2003), pp. 129–64. ‘Las memorias de María no dejan lugar a dudas de que [el nombre de su esposo] representa a dos individuos’, (p. 132). ‘María’s memoirs leave no doubt that [her husband’s name] represented two individuals’.

<sup>56</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 530. ‘To make art. But art which reaches everybody’.



alpargatas'.<sup>57</sup> Despite Lorca's resistance to overt politicism, and his contradictory statements on the political aims of La Barraca, his concern with creating a popular theatre for all reveals a democratic drive and an active engagement with socio-cultural change which is also reflected in his representation of disenfranchised groups in his poetry and his theatre, including his interest in Roma culture, as Wright observes.<sup>58</sup> Lorca suggested that there were two levels to his plays which took the diversity of his intended audience into account and made his work accessible to the masses. First, there was '[el plano] vertiente al poeta que analiza y que hace que sus personajes se encuentren para producir la idea subterránea', a level which Lorca understood would only reach part of his audience, 'las clases cultas, universitarias'.<sup>59</sup> The 'idea subterránea' evokes Lorca's metaphor of 'theatre beneath the sand', which he uses to describe a theatre which seeks the truth beneath the surface in *El público*. Secondly, there was the emotive, popular dimension for 'el pueblo más pobre y más rudo' which comprised '[un] plano natural, de la línea melódica, que toma el público sencillo para quien mi teatro físico es un gozo, un ejemplo y siempre una enseñanza'.<sup>60</sup> This second, universal level was not intended to be didactic in a judgemental way. As Andrew Anderson notes, Lorca 'is showing us how we are and how we live; never does he attempt to tell us how we *should* be or how we *should* live'.<sup>61</sup> Rather, the 'educational' aim of Lorca's theatre was to shed light on the contemporary issues of daily life in Spain through a visceral portrayal of

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<sup>57</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 570. 'I would rip the stalls and box seats out of theatres and tear the 'Gods' area down. In theatre we must give admission to the public who are on a shoestring'.

<sup>58</sup> 'Lorca', *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 4 July 2019. Whilst Lorca's poetry collection *Romancero gitano* has been translated as *Gypsy Ballads*, 'Roma' is the politically correct term.

<sup>59</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 719. 'My theatre has two planes: one is the poet's point of view, which analyses and makes the characters come together to create a deeply buried idea, which I offer to those more adept viewers [...]'.  
<sup>60</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 719. '[...] and the other is the normal one, the melodic one, which reaches the simple audience, for which my physical theatre is an enjoyment, an example, and always a lesson'. Lorca described his play *Mariana Pineda* in similar terms in a 1927 interview, which suggests that these two 'levels' were an integral part of his theatre throughout his career: 'Hay en ella dos planos: uno amplio, sintético, por el que puede deslizarse con facilidad la atención de la gente. Al segundo – el doble fondo – solo llegará una parte del público', (*Prosa I*, p. 487). 'In [*Mariana Pineda*] there are two levels: one which is broad, synthetic, which can easily capture people's attention. The second level – the false bottom – will only reach part of the audience'. By balancing these two aspects of his theatre of poetry, Lorca was able to explore complex concepts without creating an erudite, exclusive form of theatre which could not be appreciated by the general public.

<sup>61</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: La zapatera prodigiosa*, p. 86. My emphasis.

emotional suffering via his ‘escuela de llanto y risa’ and his creation of something that ‘las masas pueden atrapar sin explicárselo, con sólo *sentirlo*’.<sup>62</sup>

The power of language in Lorca’s plays and its emotional charge is also supported in the materialisation of the key symbols and themes of the language in the physical elements of his staging, in terms of costume, props, sets, and lighting. For example, in Act Three, Scene One of *Bodas de sangre*, the themes of death and fate are anthropomorphised in the figures of the Beggarwoman, the Moon, and the Woodcutters. Likewise, Lorca stated that his favourite part of *Bodas de sangre* was this more surreal Act Three, Scene One when the Moon and Death appear as characters and reality ‘se quiebra y desaparece para dar paso a la fantasía poética’.<sup>63</sup> Despite critical backlash, Lorca tells us that he felt like ‘un pez en agua’ creating this scene.<sup>64</sup> In *Doña Rosita* the central motif of the mutable rose is reflected in Rosita’s name and costume and the structure of the play, and in *El público* the search for truth and the creation of a ‘theatre beneath the sand’ is represented by the X-ray prints and the folding screen which transforms the visual appearance of the characters. In *Bernarda Alba*, the central basis of my discussion in Chapter Two, it is emotions which take plastic form as Lorca replicates the central conflict between Bernarda and her daughters and Bernarda’s obsession with honour in the material whiteness of the house. Through the contrast of whiteness and colour, Lorca sets up a visual dialectic which is reflective of the characters’ psychological states and is mutually

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<sup>62</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 428 and p. 595. ‘A school of tears and laughter’, ‘the masses can pin down without understanding it, just by *feeling* it.’ My emphasis.

<sup>63</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 535. ‘Breaks apart and disappears, giving way to a poetic fantasy’.

<sup>64</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 535. ‘A fish in water’. Reviewers writing for *ABC* criticised this scene, suggesting that ‘el tercer acto es inferior a los otros por llevarse a la exageración el recurso del símbolo poético’, Anon., ‘Beatriz: *Bodas de sangre*’, *ABC*, 9 March 1933, p. 43. ‘The third Act is inferior to the others due to the exaggeration of the resource of the poetic symbol’. However, Lorca defended his choice in an interview in October 1933: ‘Algún burgués la acusaba de ser una obra fuera de la realidad. Yo podía decirle: “Usted, señor, se va a morir y saldrá con las manos cruzadas sobre el pecho en un ataúd. Y también estará fuera de la realidad. Ésa es la realidad”’, (*Prosa I*, p. 570). ‘Some bourgeois man accused it of being a work outside of reality. I could say to him: “You, sir, are going to die and you will be carried out in a coffin with your arms crossed across your chest. And that too will be outside of reality. That is reality”’. According to Lorca biographer Leslie Stainton, Lorca also ‘resisted pressure from the play’s director to eliminate the character of the Moon from the text’ in at least one subsequent production, *Lorca: A Dream of Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), Kindle eBook, loc. 6051.

supported by references to white and coloured things in the dialogue. Part of this creation of physical poetry on the stage, or the representation of linguistic themes and ideas in material form, involves a high level of stylisation. By ‘stylisation’, I refer to how Lorca emphasises the visual elements of the staging to draw attention to the bones-and-blood of the stage and to move away from a mimetic spectating experience. Andrew Anderson argues that the exaggerated visual aesthetic of *La zapatera*, its stylisation, ‘helps to undermine and destroy the conventional realistic theatrical illusion’ and ‘challenges spectators to use their mind and imagination, to accept the unrealistic or the fantastic’.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, this anti-mimetic, exaggerated effect is found in Lorca’s *aleluya* aesthetic in *Don Perlimplín*. Francis Fergusson suggests that ‘an *aleluya* is something like a valentine [...] something heroic, overdone, absurd: an *extravagant* offering’ which influences all the elements of the staging.<sup>66</sup> Michael Thompson argues that the overall effect of this ‘startling’ and ‘unsettling’ portrayal of ideas and feelings is one of de-familiarization which aims to ‘blow apart [...] the “theatre of the bourgeoisie” and fill the stage with passion and magic’ in ways which invigorated and moved his audience.<sup>67</sup> Thus, we can understand Lorca’s ‘poetry’ as the representation of important images and themes in the dialogue in the material staging and as an overarching idea which guides the play’s aesthetic. Lorca weaves this central poetic image through all the different visual and verbal elements of the production, lifting the mutable rose or the *estampa* from the page and bringing them to life on the stage in three-dimensional form.

Jean Cocteau’s concept of ‘poetry of the theatre’ offers a useful parallel to Lorca’s aim of creating a material poetry which draws attention to the theatrical nature of the

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<sup>65</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: La zapatera prodigiosa*, pp. 101–02.

<sup>66</sup> Francis Fergusson, ‘*Don Perlimplín*: Lorca’s Theatre-Poetry’, *The Kenyon Review*, 17.3 (1955), 337–48 (p. 342).

<sup>67</sup> Michael Thompson, ‘Poetry that Gets up off the Page and Becomes Human: Poetic Coherence and Eccentricity in Lorca’s Theatre’, in *Fire, Blood and the Alphabet: One Hundred Years of Lorca*, ed. by Sebastian Daggart and Michael Thompson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 67–79 (p. 79).

production and rejects verisimilitude.<sup>68</sup> In his study of Lorca's and Cocteau's 'poetic language' Nelson Cerqueira draws our attention to the similarities of their ideas, particularly how their 'poetics of the theater' is 'not restricted to words' but incorporates all of the elements of the material staging and the ways in which they create 'a new, startling reality on a transformed stage' which troubles the conventional division between audience and performance.<sup>69</sup> Cerqueira also sees their experiments with theatre and poetry as 'working along different paths to achieve the same goal: the rediscovery of poetic drama, a kind of magical realism [...] dancing between the real and surreal'.<sup>70</sup> Whilst Cerqueira attributes this effect to the characters' 'inability to face life as it is' and their consequent retreat into a world of fantasy, this aspect of theatre of poetry is more fruitfully interpreted as part of Lorca's and Cocteau's concerns with unsettling and stimulating their audience and the move away from a mimetic, slice-of-life spectating experience.

Like Lorca, Cocteau is not advocating verse drama, which he saw as 'a misuse of the physical properties of the stage' as Laura Doyle Gates observes.<sup>71</sup> Rather, Cocteau 'wanted to overwhelm the spectator not with words but with image-filled, poetic architecture' in which metaphors were 'active, dynamic, dramatized' rather than merely spoken and which was extended to all of the elements of the staging.<sup>72</sup> In the 1922 prologue to his ballet libretto *The Eiffel Tower Wedding Party*, Cocteau explains the difference between his 'poetry of the theatre' and 'poetry in the theatre':

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<sup>68</sup> We know that Lorca was familiar with Cocteau's work because he mentions him in his 1928 lecture 'Sketch de la nueva pintura', and Cipriano Rivas Cherif, who worked closely with Lorca, staged Cocteau's play *Orphée* in December 1928 with his experimental theatre company *El Caracol*. Cocteau and Lorca were both promoted in The Yellow Manifesto or the Catalan Anti-Art Manifesto, written by Dalí, Gasch, and Lluís Montanyà, which was published for the first time in Spanish translation in *gallo*, also in 1928. See *Prosa I*, p. 276 and Ian Gibson, *Federico Garcia Lorca: A Life* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), p. 209. Gibson has also commented on the influence of *Orphée* on *El público* whilst Leslie Stainton suggests that *Así que pasen* is influenced by Cocteau's, Pirandello's, and Dalí's conceptions of time, (Gibson, *Federico Garcia Lorca: A Life*, pp. 294–95, and Stainton, loc. 5385-5392).

<sup>69</sup> Nelson Cerqueira, 'Poetic Language in the Plays of Lorca and Cocteau', *Chiricú*, 3.2 (1983), 20–38 (p. 21).

<sup>70</sup> Cerqueira, p. 21.

<sup>71</sup> Laura Doyle Gates, 'Jean Cocteau and 'la poésie du théâtre'', *Romance Quarterly*, 35:4 (1988), 435–41 (p. 435).

<sup>72</sup> Doyle Gates, p. 435.

L'action de ma pièce est imagée tandis que le texte ne l'est pas. J'essaie donc de substituer une 'poésie *du* théâtre' à la 'poésie *au* théâtre'. La poésie au théâtre est une dentelle délicate, impossible à voir de loin. La poésie du théâtre serait une grosse dentelle; une dentelle en cordages, un navire sur la mer. *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* peuvent avoir l'aspect terrible d'une goutte de poésie au microscope. Les scènes s'emboîtent comme les mots d'un poème.<sup>73</sup>

The idea of a 'grosse dentelle; une dentelle en cordages' suggests that Cocteau intended his performances to draw attention to their theatrical nature. Cocteau 'wants us to see the workings of the theatre, to see how it functions, to be totally aware that we are seeing a theatrical production', as Annette Shandler-Levitt observes.<sup>74</sup> Like Lorca's image of bones protruding from beneath the poetic costume, the 'rigging' of Cocteau's theatre will be evident to the spectator, bold and stylised rather than a subtle, delicate lace which offers the illusion of verisimilitude. Shandler-Levitt notes that the metaphor of 'poésie au microscope' is evocative of the exaggeration of the absurdity of reality.<sup>75</sup> This aim echoes Lorca's stylisation and anti-mimesis and his fascination with incorporating music and dance into his plays, yet implies a distorting effect which we do not find in Lorca's theatre. Rather, Lorca's work acts as a mirror, reflecting the true nature of the audience, and explores people's inner realities beneath the masks of social appearances.

Another important difference between Cocteau's 'poetry of the theatre' and Lorca's theatre of poetry is the role of the actors. Gates notes that in Cocteau's vision, 'the role of the actor increased until a veritable exchange of roles took place' and 'characters became objects

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<sup>73</sup> Jean Cocteau, *Théâtre 1* (Paris: Grasset, 1957), p. 5. My emphasis. 'The action of my play is not text but image. I'm trying to substitute 'poetry *of* the theatre' for 'poetry *in* the theatre'. Poetry in the theatre is a delicate lace, impossible to see at a distance. Poetry of the theatre is a thick lace; a rigging of lace, a ship on the sea. *The Eiffel Tower Wedding Party* has the power of the terrible appearance of a drop of poetry under a microscope. The scenes fit together like the words of a poem'.

<sup>74</sup> Annette Shandler-Levitt, 'Jean Cocteau's Theatre: Idea and Enactment', *Theatre Journal*, 45.3 (1993), 363–72 (p. 364).

<sup>75</sup> Shandler-Levitt, pp. 364–65.

and objects became characters'.<sup>76</sup> This was his 'décor qui bouge' or 'moving set' in which the characters function 'like different parts of a complex machine', an effect which is created by their visual appearance as archetypal figures, their movements, and 'the way in which other objects or stage situations control them'.<sup>77</sup> When Cocteau's ballet *Parade* premiered in 1917 the audience was 'shocked by the dehumanised, quasi-architectural or blatantly stereotyped "characters"'.<sup>78</sup> In contrast, Lorca's theatre of poetry is deeply rooted in the 'huesos', 'sangre', 'gritos', and 'olores' of what it means to be human. As Thompson argues, although many of Lorca's characters are 'associated with verbal and visual symbolic elements that define their function in the overall poetic structure' they 'simultaneously encapsulate[e] powerful evocations of human experience'.<sup>79</sup> These are not mechanised figures but three-dimensional, visceral characters of bones-and-blood. The ways in which Lorca and Cocteau incorporate the linguistic and plastic elements of their theatre also differ. Rather than the mechanisation and dehumanisation which Cocteau explored, Lorca enhanced the associations between the linguistic and material elements of the staging by focusing on a key idea which he extended to all of the aspects of the performance and by using colour as a visual linking device to bring set, costume, props, and lighting together.

Many of Lorca's plays are defined by an overarching style or image which guides this transference of poetic themes and symbols to the three-dimensional stage and provides this internal poetic structure. Thompson describes this central image as a poetic 'core' or 'nucleus' surrounded by 'complex layers of associations [which] are built up by means of words, staging and movement' and which we should envision as 'a series of concentric

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<sup>76</sup> Doyle Gates, pp. 435–36.

<sup>77</sup> Doyle Gates, p. 438.

<sup>78</sup> Doyle Gates, p. 437. Written for Sergei Diaghilev's itinerant dance troupe Ballets Russes, *Parade* was a collaboration with Erik Satie (music), Picasso (costume and sets), the Ballets Russes's Léonide Massine (choreography), and Apollinaire (programme notes).

<sup>79</sup> Thompson, p. 74.

circles' surrounding the poetic motif.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, Sumner M. Greenfield sees Lorca's theatre of poetry as 'a disciplined integration of an infinity of poetic elements [...] which are shaped and unified by a systematically conceived inner design'.<sup>81</sup> The subtitles are a crucial tool in terms of our understanding of this poetic core or inner design. Greenfield argues that Lorca's use of subtitles 'is the key, sometimes obvious, sometimes extremely subtle, to the artistic conception or the poetic substructure by which the dramatic action is given shape and is seconded or re-expressed'.<sup>82</sup> Sometimes the subtitles indicate the mood or genre of the play, without necessarily revealing the play's aesthetic influences and central motifs. However, the photographic documentary in *Bernarda Alba*, which forms part of my discussion of black-and-white contrasts in Chapter Two, and the *estampa* in *Mariana Pineda*, the *aleluya* in *Don Perlimplín*, and the mutable rose in *Doña Rosita*, as I explore in Chapter Four, are critical for our understanding of Lorca's theatre of poetry in these works.

In this 'animation' of poetic themes, symbols, emotions, and two-dimensional images, Lorca drew on a vast range of aesthetic forms and influences across his plays and within each play. His work is thus multi-modal and hybrid, in the sense that it is inspired by different artistic media, and is influenced by both traditional and avant-garde sources. His style is always changing as he experiments with different methods of bringing poetry to the stage in material form and with creating a visceral, unsettling spectating experience. Whilst Edwards argues that Symbolism and Surrealism had the most impact on Lorca's work, Lorca's theatre also reflects the influences of *commedia dell'arte*, puppet theatre, classical and Greek tragedy, Golden Age theatre, 1920s and 1930s cinema, Expressionism, the painters Goya and

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<sup>80</sup> Thompson, p. 70.

<sup>81</sup> Sumner M. Greenfield, 'Lorca's Theatre: A Synthetic Re-examination', *Journal of Spanish Studies: Twentieth Century*, 5 (1977), 31–46 (p. 44).

<sup>82</sup> Sumner M. Greenfield, 'The Problem of *Mariana Pineda*', *The Massachusetts Review*, 1.4 (1960), 751–63 (p. 753).

Bosch, and key figures including Cervantes and Shakespeare.<sup>83</sup> There is also a real tension between tradition and the avant-garde throughout Lorca's works, which is explored in Dru Dougherty and María Francisca Vilches de Frutos's edited volume *El Teatro en España: entre la tradición y la vanguardia, 1918-1939* (1992) [Theatre in Spain: Between Tradition and the Avant-Garde, 1918-1939].<sup>84</sup> As we have already noted, *Bodas de sangre* is an obvious example of this juxtaposition, but Wright argues that we can also see these elements in a more subtle way in *Bernarda Alba* through the visual distortion of the policing of women and the 'mad' character of María Josefa.<sup>85</sup> It was this blending of the folkloric and the avant-garde which led Lorca's close friends the film-maker Luis Buñuel and the Surrealist artist Salvador Dalí to view Lorca's work disparagingly, particularly *Romancero gitano*. Dalí described this collection as 'too local, too anecdotal, too tied up in the lyrical norms of the past'.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Buñuel suggested that *Romancero gitano* had 'the finesse and apparent modernity which any poetry needs nowadays [...] But between this and [...] the genuine, exquisite and great poets of today there is a deep gulf'.<sup>87</sup>

Lorca's time at the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid (1919-1928), which Leslie Stainton describes as 'an informal residential college where cultured young men could live

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<sup>83</sup> See Gwynne Edwards, *Dramatists in Perspective: Spanish Theatre in the Twentieth Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1985).

<sup>84</sup> See Dru Dougherty and María Francisca Vilches de Frutos (eds), *El Teatro en España: entre la tradición y la vanguardia, 1918-1939* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Fundación Federico García Lorca, and Tabacalera, 1992).

<sup>85</sup> 'Lorca', *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 4 July 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Cited in Gibson, *Federico García Lorca: A Life*, p. 216.

<sup>87</sup> Cited in Gibson, *Federico García Lorca: A Life*, p. 220.



and learn at leisure', was crucial in terms of these aesthetic influences.<sup>88</sup> During Lorca's stay at the Residencia he was exposed to visiting figures including Paul Valéry, Le Corbusier, Blaise Cendrars, Henri Bergson, Igor Stravinsky, and Maurice Ravel, and this is where he formed his famous friendships with Buñuel and Dalí.<sup>89</sup> It was also in Madrid that Lorca met the director Gregorio Martínez Sierra, who would go on to stage Lorca's first play *El maleficio* in 1920. Lorca's correspondence reveals a wide circle of friends and acquaintances that included the composer Manuel de Falla, the art critique Sebastià Gasch, and the poets Rafael Alberti, Jorge Guillén, Gerardo Diego, and Luis Cernuda. Lorca, Alberti, Guillén, Diego, and Cernuda were part of the so-called 'Generation of '27', along with Pedro Salinas, Dámaso Alonso, Vicente Aleixandre, Manuel Altolaguirre, and Emilio Prados. Whilst C. Christopher Soufas has criticised the Spanish literary generation model for its exclusion of female writers, its elitism, and its reductive, pigeonholing nature, Lorca's inclusion as a member of the Generation of '27 does give us an idea of his status, at least as a poet, and of the influential circle of which he was part.<sup>90</sup> Lorca also maintained close working relationships with the director and founder of Club Anfistora, Pura Ucelay, the director Cipriano Rivas Cherif, the actress Margarita Xirgu, the set designer and amateur actor Santiago Ontañón, and the actress Lola Membrives. As Delgado tells us, the influence of

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<sup>88</sup> Stainton, loc. 1140. Lorca remained involved with the Residencia until his death in 1936. In June-July 2017 the Residencia held an exhibition about Lorca's time there entitled 'A Room of One's Own. Federico García Lorca in the Residencia de Estudiantes, 1919-1936', which was also displayed at the Federico García Lorca Centre in Granada in March-July 2018. The Community of Madrid celebrated the centenary of Lorca's arrival in 2019 with the Congreso Internacional *Federico García Lorca: A Hundred Years in Madrid (1919-2019)* from 18-23 February in collaboration with the Museo Reina Sofía. The conference encompassed Lorca's art and music as well as his theatre and poetry and key speakers included Lorca academics Emilio Peral Vega, María Francisca Vilches de Frutos, and Jonathan Mayhew. Peral Vega was heavily involved in the centenary celebrations, also taking part in a round table discussion on Lorca during the Madrid Libraries Book Fair on 10 June.

<sup>89</sup> Lorca's relationships with Dalí and Buñuel have been well-documented. See for example Manuel Delgado Morales and A. J. Proust, (eds), *Lorca, Buñuel, Dalí: Art and Theory* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 2001) and Gwynne Edwards, *Lorca, Buñuel, Dalí: Forbidden Pleasures and Connected Lives* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009).

<sup>90</sup> See C. Christopher Soufas Jr. *The Subject in Question: Early Contemporary Spanish Literature and Modernism* (Washington, D.C and London: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), pp. 19–50.

Xirgu and her theatre company cannot be underestimated, especially in Latin America.<sup>91</sup>

Xirgu went on to stage productions of *Mariana Pineda*, *Bodas de sangre*, *Yerma* and *Bernarda Alba*.

As an individual Lorca was a polymath and his opus consists of more than the poetry and full-length plays for which he is renowned. His *obra completa* includes an unfinished opera; a film script; puppet plays; short plays; drawings; set and costume designs; literary review *gallo*; lectures; recitals; and prose. On his death in 1936, Lorca left unfinished works behind including one complete Act of each of the plays *La destrucción de Sodoma* [The Destruction of Sodom], *Los sueños de mi prima Aurelia* [The Dreams of my Cousin Aurelia], and *Comedia sin título* [Play without a Title], also known as *El sueño de la vida* [A Dream of Life].<sup>92</sup> We also have fragments of the plays *Posada* [The Inn], *Diego Corrientes*, *Ampliación Fotográfica* [Photographic Enlargement], *Drama fotográfico* [Photographic Drama], *Rosa mudable* [Mutable Rose], *La bola negra* [The Black Ball], *Casa de maternidad* [House of Maternity], and *Dragón* [Dragon]. Lorca's unedited juvenilia were also published as recently as 1994.<sup>93</sup> This volume included *Cristo*, which McDermid explores in his study.<sup>94</sup> My study focuses on Lorca's ten completed plays. I exclude Lorca's puppet plays which constitute a

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<sup>91</sup> 'Lorca', *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 4 July 2019.

<sup>92</sup> See Marie Laffranque, *Teatro inconcluso: fragmentos y proyectos inacabados* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1987). *Comedia sin título* explores the fragmentation of the stage-audience boundary as the audience overruns the stage and joins in with the action; *Los sueños de mi prima Aurelia* focuses on the life of Aurelia and her friends in Granada and was an elegy to Lorca's childhood; and *La destrucción de Sodoma* was intended to be the third part in Lorca's trilogy of the Spanish earth and relates the Biblical story of Lot and the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters. The two unwritten Acts of *Comedia sin título* were re-imagined by Alberto Conejero in 2018. See Federico García Lorca, *Comedia sin título, seguida de "El sueño de la vida" de Alberto Conejero*, ed. by Emilio Peral Vega (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2018). In an interview, Conejero described this work as 'un nuevo texto escrito en un vacío infinito, un diálogo entre lo que fue y lo que no pudo ser', emphasising that he did not intend to 'dar fin al texto'. 'A new text written into the infinite void, a dialogue between what was and what could have been', 'give an ending to the text'. See Rocío García, 'La *Comedia sin título* de Lorca ya tiene su final', *El País*, 14 February 2018 <[https://elpais.com/cultura/2018/02/12/actualidad/1518442717\\_657690.html](https://elpais.com/cultura/2018/02/12/actualidad/1518442717_657690.html)> [accessed 11 September 2019]. This version was staged by Lluís Pasqual at the Teatro Español in Madrid in February 2019. See Rocío García's interview with Pasqual: 'El teatro de Lorca retrata lo que más nos duele', *El País*, 15 January 2019 <[https://elpais.com/cultura/2019/01/11/actualidad/1547217683\\_706159.html](https://elpais.com/cultura/2019/01/11/actualidad/1547217683_706159.html)> [accessed 11 September 2019].

<sup>93</sup> This volume also included *Jehová* [Jehovah], *Místicas* [Mystics], *Sombras* [Shadows], and *La viudita que se quería casar* [The Little Widow who Wanted to Wed]. See Wright, 'Theatre', in *A Companion to Federico García Lorca*, ed. by Federico Bonaddio (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2010), pp. 39–62 (p. 41).

<sup>94</sup> See McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 9–34.

different genre and stand in contrast to his theatre of poetry. However, as I will suggest in my conclusion, a future study which could extend my ideas and findings to Lorca's incomplete or unedited plays would be a productive line of investigation.

## PRIMARY SOURCES

Lorca's theatre has traditionally been divided into different temporal or stylistic periods, for example his 'minor' plays (*El maleficio*, *Mariana Pineda*, *La zapatera*, and *Don Perlimplín*, according to Edwards), his 'surreal' or 'impossible' plays (*El público*, *Así que pasen cinco años*), and his 'rural trilogy' (*Bodas de sangre*, *Yerma*, *Bernarda Alba*), which is often seen as the culmination of his work. However, this categorisation fails to take into account the diachronic nature of Lorca's theatre, the importance he placed on *El público* and *Así que pasen* in terms of his theatre of poetry, and the fact that he intended the third part of his 'trilogy' to focus on the Biblical story of Sodom and Lot and to explore the theme of incest.<sup>95</sup> Thus the unfinished play *La destrucción de Sodoma* is the third part, not *Bernarda Alba*. This grouping also complicates the status of *Doña Rosita* which interrupts the chronology of the 'trilogy' and was originally conceived in 1924 although it was not completed until 1935.<sup>96</sup> Rather than a separate, 'experimental' period, *El público* and *Así que pasen* form a crucial part of Lorca's opus, as in 1936 he stated that 'en estas comedias imposibles está mi verdadero propósito. Pero para demostrar una personalidad y tener derecho al respeto he dado otras cosas'.<sup>97</sup> These works are 'not a stepping stone to the rural trilogy', warns Wright.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> See Federico García Lorca, *Palabra de Lorca: Declaraciones y entrevistas completas*, ed. by Rafael Inglada (Barcelona: Ediciones Malpaso, 2017), p. 129, p. 339, and p. 349.

<sup>96</sup> In an interview in 1936 Lorca revealed that 'la concebí en el año 1924 [...] se me apareció terminada, única, imposible de reformar', (*Prosa I*, p. 731). 'I thought up the play in 1924 [...] It came to me finished, unique, impossible to change'.

<sup>97</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 731. 'My true purpose lies in these impossible plays. But in order to show consideration and respect I have done other things'.

<sup>98</sup> 'Lorca', *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 4 July 2019.

Rather, this statement by Lorca suggests that these plays were the core of his work, and even problematizes the status of some of his other works. This compartmentalisation has prevented us from exploring colour in its fullness and its equivocation and offers an incomplete view of the richness and variety of Lorca's colour-work. I will argue that Lorca's preoccupation with material colour is present in each of his plays in complementary and contrasting forms and, notwithstanding the distinctiveness of each work, there are also underlying trends which bring his theatrical corpus together as a whole. Rather than a series of distinct and divergent stylistic periods, each of Lorca's plays forms part of his theatre of poetry within which material colour plays a central role.

Lorca's first completed play *El maleficio de la mariposa* (1920) is marked simply as '[una] comedia en dos actos y un prólogo', and is his only work with an entirely animal cast; the protagonists are insects and the plot focuses on a young poet beetle's doomed infatuation with a wounded butterfly.<sup>99</sup> Whilst the play was a commercial failure – as Delgado tells us, its premiere was 'marked by jeers, heckling and calls for insecticide to be poured on the scorpion woodcutter' – contemporary critics saw potential in its 'poetic vocabulary', which Lorca uses to create a sensual, majestic world of natural colour.<sup>100</sup> Lorca's colour-work in this play explores the varied colours offered by the pastoral setting and by the bodies of the insects, including the Boy Beetle's yellow antenna and foot, Silvia's jet-black shell, and the ethereal white beauty of the Butterfly. I explore the Butterfly's visual portrayal in my discussion of female bodily whiteness and the dying body in Chapter Three. In *Mariana Pineda* (1925) Lorca also engages with the trope of corporeal whiteness and bodily fading

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<sup>99</sup> 'A play in two acts and a prologue'. *El maleficio* was first staged by Gregorio Martínez Sierra's experimental Teatro Eslava in Madrid on in March 1920 and only ran for four performances. The Butterfly was played by dancer La Argentinita. See Maria M. Delgado, *Federico García Lorca* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 39–43. Whilst Martínez Sierra had originally promised to stage *Mariana Pineda*, he reneged on this agreement, ruining his friendship with Lorca. In a letter to Melchor Fernández Almagro in March 1926 Lorca refers to Martínez Sierra's 'bastard' behaviour, enclosing a caricature of Martínez Sierra with horns, spots, and a long tail, (*Prosa* 2, p. 890).

<sup>100</sup> Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 41.

through his depiction of the eponymous central protagonist.<sup>101</sup> *Mariana Pineda* is based on an historical figure who conspired with the Liberals against the king in early-nineteenth-century Granada and was eventually captured, imprisoned, and executed by garrote. Lorca, for whom the story was a part of his childhood, chose to focus on ‘Mariana la amante’, and portrays her as the romantic, suffering heroine.<sup>102</sup> Lorca subtitles the play as ‘[un] romance popular en tres estampas’, suggesting that the image of the engraving will drive the aesthetic of the play.<sup>103</sup> *Mariana Pineda* is an important example of my exploration of Lorca’s theatre of poetry in Chapter Four, especially the ways in which he threads the colours of the central *estampa* aesthetic through the sets, lighting, props, and costumes. As we shall see in my exploration of the role of object colour in Lorca’s theatre of poetry in that chapter, his rich and varied use of coloured light, his appeal to the senses through the motif of the implicit yellow quinces, and his embodiment of key themes and motifs in Mariana’s costumes make full use of the multiple forms of colour offered by the theatrical medium.

Lorca continues to experiment with the material colours of the staging as part of his theatre of poetry in *Amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (1925).<sup>104</sup> Lorca’s subtitling of *Don Perlimplín* as ‘[una] aleluya erótica en cuatro cuadros’ points to the diverse nature of the play in this surprising juxtaposition of terms.<sup>105</sup> An ‘aleluya’ was a type of popular comic strip with religious origins that was based on stock characters. Lorca also labels the play as a ‘versión de cámara’, suggesting that it was ‘un boceto de un drama

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<sup>101</sup> *Mariana Pineda* premiered in June 1927 in Barcelona at the Goya Theatre with Lorca as director. The set was designed by Dalí, based on Lorca’s sketches, with Margarita Xirgu as Mariana. See Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, pp. 54–56.

<sup>102</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 489. ‘Hay mil Marianas de Pineda distintas [...] Pero yo no las iba a «hacer» todas. Puesto a elegir, me interesó más la Mariana amante’. ‘There are a thousand different Mariana Pinedas [...] But I was not going to “do” all of them. Pushed to choose, I was most interested by Mariana the lover’.

<sup>103</sup> ‘A popular ballad in three prints’.

<sup>104</sup> *Don Perlimplín* was originally to be staged in 1929 by Cipriano Rivas Cherif’s experimental theatre group El Caracol. However, the play was banned by state censorship. It was eventually staged by El Club Teatral Anfistora in 1933 in a double bill with *La zapatera* and was directed by both Lorca and Pura Ucelay with Santiago Ontañón designing the set and the costumes. See Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, pp. 68–69.

<sup>105</sup> ‘An erotic *aleluya* in four scenes’.

grande' which he intended to expand on at a later date.<sup>106</sup> In *Don Perlimplín*, Lorca explores the story of a middle-aged man, Perlimplín, his seductive, unfaithful teenage bride, Belisa, and his elaborate ruse to save her soul or, in other readings, for example John Lyon's, seek his cuckold's revenge.<sup>107</sup> Upon learning about Belisa's infidelity on their wedding night, Perlimplín pretends to be a secret admirer, leading Belisa to fall in love with him by letter. Perlimplín then fatally stabs himself with an emerald dagger, whilst in his disguise as the admirer in the red velvet cape, leaving his young wife confused and heartbroken. Whilst Lorca begins with the archetypal theme of the old man unsuitably married to a teenage girl and leads us to believe that we are going to see a Golden Age honour play, from the moment in which the Duendes appear on Belisa and Perlimplín's wedding night, our expectations are challenged at every turn.<sup>108</sup> There are two core aspects of colour which Lorca engages with in *Don Perlimplín*: the colours of the human body and the colours of the sets, props, and costumes. The portrayals of female bodily whiteness that we find in *El maleficio* and *Mariana Pineda* take on a different form in *Don Perlimplín* in Lorca's exploration of Belisa's erotic white body, which troubles the conflation of material whiteness with the symbolic values of innocence and purity that dominates aspects of the portrayal of the Butterfly in *El maleficio*, Mariana in *Mariana Pineda*, and the Bride in *Bodas de sangre*. In contrast, Lorca's depiction of male corporeality in *Don Perlimplín* is centred on the redness of blood and the puncturing of flesh. This forms part of my discussion of masculinity and bodily colour in Chapter Three, along with *El público*, *Así que pasen*, and *Bodas de sangre*. This bloody motif is reflected in the colours of the red velvet cape, which is the material representation of a key poetic symbol. In Chapter Four I probe the significance of the colours of the sets and the

<sup>106</sup> *Prosa I*, pp. 531-32. 'Chamber version', 'a sketch of a bigger drama'.

<sup>107</sup> See John Lyon, 'Love, Imagination and Society in *Amor de don Perlimplín* and *La zapatera prodigiosa*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 63.3 (1986), 235-45.

<sup>108</sup> A 'duende' is also an imp-like figure or 'fantastic spirit, with the form of an old person or child in traditional narratives, who inhabits houses and causes disruption and turmoil' according to the Real Academia Española Dictionary (RAE), as well as the spirit of artistic creation and the 'thrill of the live'. I have left the names of the 'Duende' characters in the original Spanish to capture this dual association.

green frock coat, golden antlers, red cape, and green emerald dagger in terms of *Perlimplín*'s key transformation from a stock *aleluya* character to one of bones-and-blood which captures the visceral emotions of Lorca's theatre of poetry.

The use of costume colour to reinforce the inner reality of the protagonist comprises Lorca's most sustained engagement with colour as part of his theatre of poetry in *La zapatera prodigiosa* (1926), his 'farsa violenta en dos actos'.<sup>109</sup> It is one of Lorca's few plays to have an authorial prologue, along with *El maleficio*. He used this prologue to openly discuss his views on the importance of the playwright's vision over the audience's demands and his disappointment that magical transformations – poetry – had disappeared from the stage. Like *Don Perlimplín*, *La zapatera* focuses on the mismatched marriage between a young woman and an old man. Harangued by his bitter wife, at the end of Act One the Shoemaker leaves the village in despair. In Act Two, now on her own, the Shoemaker's Wife has transformed the workshop into a bar, and is courted by admirers. However, she rejects their advances, remaining faithful to her absent husband, who she has re-formed in her imagination into a larger-than-life hero. The Shoemaker returns, disguised as a performer, and presents a *historia de ciego* about an older man cuckolded by his young wife.<sup>110</sup> A knife fight breaks out between the wife's admirers, and as the villagers descend on her, the Shoemaker reveals his

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<sup>109</sup> 'Violent farce in two acts'. The play premiered at the Teatro Español in Madrid in December 1930. The sets and costumes were designed by Salvador Bartolozzi, based on drawings provided by Lorca, which are influenced by Picasso's designs for Falla's *Three Cornered Hat*. See Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, pp. 61–63. As well as the Club Anfístora version with *Don Perlimplín* in 1933, *La zapatera* was staged in November 1933 at the Teatro Avenida in Buenos Aires with Lola Membrives as the Shoemaker's Wife.

<sup>110</sup> A 'historia de ciego' or 'blind person's story' is a type of ballad which is supported by visual depictions of key moments on a large poster board. Andrew Anderson describes it as 'the popularised and often debased form of ballad which came into prominence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries after the heyday of the medieval *romance viejo* [old ballad] and the Golden Age *romance nuevo* [new ballad], and which was concerned with sensational stories of one kind or another, frequently of famous crimes. The *cartelón* [poster board] is the old-fashioned equivalent of a sort of giant strip-cartoon: the key moments in the stories are depicted in a series of roughly-drawn scenes, the commentary and dialogue are provided by the recited *romance*, and the story's movement from one picture to the next is indicated by means of a pointer', (*García Lorca: La zapatera prodigiosa*, p. 70.) Anderson also draws our attention to the links between the *historia de ciego* and the *estampa* and *aleluya* aesthetics of *Mariana Pineda* and *Don Perlimplín* respectively. Of course, the ballad is central to Lorca's conception of *Mariana Pineda*. Furthermore, in a letter to Fernández Almagro in September 1923 Lorca described *Mariana Pineda* as 'una especie de cartelón de ciego estilizado', (*Prosa* 2, p. 823). Original emphasis. 'A type of stylized [historia de] ciego poster'.

true identity and they stand together against the town's wrath, although there are indications that they will revert to their nagging, bitter ways. Whilst colour is a less central part of Lorca's theatre of poetry in this play, nevertheless it has important implications, particularly in terms of costume. In my discussion in Chapter Four, I consider how the Shoemaker's Wife's two dresses – '*verde rabioso*' in Act One (p. 185) and '*rojo encendido*' in Act Two (p. 215) – are a key part of Lorca's portrayal of her emotions and passionate, lively nature in material form.<sup>111</sup> This visual depiction of the Shoemaker's Wife's fiery nature is also extended to her physical movements and sharp, abrasive dialogue. In contrast, Lorca uses the costumes of Don Mirlo, Mr. Blackbird, who is dressed in black-and-white like the creature invoked in his name, and the myriad female neighbours in their respective red, purple, black, green, and yellow dresses in order to create a visual contrast with the Shoemaker's Wife, exposing their puppet-like natures in contrast to this visceral, explosive character of bones-and-blood.

Lorca's next completed play, *El público* (1930), 'un drama en cinco cuadros', constitutes a more sustained engagement with the puncturing of the male body and the implicit colours of wounding and spilled blood than we saw in *Don Perlimplín*. In this play, Lorca also experiments with anti-mimetic colours and materials in terms of the characters' bodies and costumes. McDermid argues that too much emphasis has been placed on the 'impossible' nature of the play in terms of the subject of homosexuality, the incompleteness of the text, and its internal structure, as this debate often overshadows critical focus on the play itself.<sup>112</sup> Lorca himself tells us that the play was impossible because of its role as a mirror reflecting the audience's secret and less wholesome desires, which they would never

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<sup>111</sup> 'Rabid, furious green', 'angry, burning red'.

<sup>112</sup> See McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 101–13.



tolerate.<sup>113</sup> *El público* is certainly Lorca's most challenging play in terms of its plot and characterisation due to its multiple, competing metatheatrical layers and the multiple 'roles' of the characters in the work. Essentially, the Director is coerced by the First, Second, and Third Men into staging a production of *Romeo and Juliet* which explores 'the theatre beneath the sand', a theatre which prioritises the truth that lies beneath the surface and communicates our inner psychological realities, alluding to Lorca's theatre of poetry. At the same time, they try to make him face up to his homosexuality. The audience in the play revolt against the production – in which both Romeo and Juliet are played by men of different ages – and kill the actors and First Man. The Director also dies, after debating with the Magician / Death about the nature of theatre and art, now defending this visceral 'theatre beneath the sand' rather than 'the theatre of the open air', a theatre of surface and appearances which represents the hollow slice-of-life theatre that was dominating the Spanish stage at that time. A reading of the play which explores the role of colour in the complex and shifting visual portrayal of the characters offers a richer understanding of *El público* as a sustained engagement with Lorca's theatre of poetry and sheds light on the challenging concept of 'a theatre beneath the sand'. McDermid suggests that *El público* is centred on a 'dialectic of surface and depth' whilst both Wright and Andrew Anderson have commented on Lorca's juxtaposition of surfaces and the various layers of costume with the inner layers of the body.<sup>114</sup> As Anderson

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<sup>113</sup> 'En cuanto a la otra, que se titula «El público», no pretendo estrenarla en Buenos Aires ni en ninguna parte, pues creo que no hay compañía que se anime a llevarla a escena ni público que la tolere sin indignarse [...] porque es el espejo del público. Es ir haciendo desfilar en escena los dramas propios que cada uno de los espectadores está pensando, mientras está mirando, muchas veces sin fijarse, la representación. Y como el drama de cada uno a veces es muy punzante y generalmente nada honroso, pues los espectadores en seguida se levantarían indignados e impedirían que continuara la representación', (*Prosa I*, p. 564). 'With regard to the other play, which is titled "The Public", I do not intend to stage it in Buenos Aires nor anywhere else, because I do not think that there is a company that would produce it nor an audience which would tolerate it without outrage [...] because it is the mirror of the audience. It is to make the private dramas of what each spectator is thinking as they are watching the performance, often without being conscious of it, parade across the stage. And as each person's drama is caustic and generally not at all honourable, the spectators would get straight to their feet in outrage and prevent the performance from continuing'.

<sup>114</sup> See McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 114–25.

notes, *El público* can be seen as a journey through the body.<sup>115</sup> The material colours of the costumes and the characters' bodies emphasise this transition in several ways. First, the 'theatre of the open air' is represented by the endless array of changing costumes which Edwards describes as 'a brilliant parade of whites, blacks, reds, pinks, golds and yellows'.<sup>116</sup> The body becomes part of this superficial layer, alienated from reality by its anti-mimetic colours and materials, as exemplified by Elena's blue eyebrows and plaster feet and Julieta's pink celluloid breasts. Secondly, the images of male wounding, both staged and in the dialogue, offer a visual or mental representation of the search for inner truth which drives the play, through the puncturing of the bodily surface and the portrayal of the implicit colours of bones, blood, and scatological materials. This is, quite literally, the bones-and-blood which lie beneath the costumes of poetry that Lorca describes. Lorca uses the discourse of violence, the anti-mimetic bodily colours, and the remarkable range of coloured costumes to create a theatre of poetry which galvanises the real-world audience.

Costume colour, anti-mimetic bodily colours, and the redness of blood are also an important part of Lorca's theatre of poetry in *Así que pasen cinco años* (1931), despite the many differences between the two plays. *Así que pasen*, subtitled as '[una] leyenda del tiempo', focuses on the theme of a life lost in waiting, as encapsulated in the title.<sup>117</sup> In this sense it echoes *Doña Rosita*, which Lorca conceived in 1924 although it was not completed until 1935. After five years of waiting the Young Man goes to claim his fiancée, but finds himself rejected. Having learnt his lesson about the passing of time, he finds love with the Typist whom he cruelly rejected in the first Act. However, the Typist insists that he wait a further five years before they can be together. By Act Three the Young Man is physically

<sup>115</sup> Andrew Anderson, "'Un difícilísimo juego poético": Theme and Symbol in Lorca's *El público*', *Romance Quarterly*, 39.3 (1992), 331–46 (p. 332).

<sup>116</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 86.

<sup>117</sup> 'A legend of time'. Lorca originally hoped to stage the play with the Club Teatral Anfistora in May/June 1936. However, the production was delayed and *Así que pasen* finally premiered in Spain at the Teatro Eslava in Madrid in 1978, directed by Miguel Narros and with set designs by José Hernández. See Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, pp. 147–50.

depleted and when the Three Players or Fates come to play for his life in a game of cards, the Young Man loses and he dies. One of the key elements of Lorca's colour-work in *Así que pasen* is the creation of a macabre environment for the audience. Throughout the play we are confronted by an array of uncanny characters which embody the implicit colours of the dead body: the dead child with his white waxen skin and 'dried lily' lips, the dead blue cat stained with blood, the ghostly Mannequin in her white wedding dress, and the sequinned Clown with his (white) skull-like face. This visual impact is complemented by Lorca's frequent use of blue light, creating an eerie in-between world which captures the themes of time and death in physical form. The affective power of these disturbing colours is compounded by the anti-mimetic bodily colour of the First Mask, with her yellow silk hair, gloves, and sequined dress, and 'flame-like' appearance. The Young Man himself is part of this ghoulis exploration of material colour. I consider Lorca's portrayal of this character as an exsanguinated, dying body and the nature of his death in my discussion of colour and corporeality in Chapter Three. Throughout *Así que pasen* Lorca challenges and disturbs the audience by bringing the colours of the dead body to the stage in material form.

In *Bodas de sangre* (1932), Lorca's 'tragedia en tres actos y siete cuadros', the importance of the motif of blood is evident in its very title.<sup>118</sup> Lorca's colour-work in this play revolves around the body, particularly the representation of female whiteness and the redness implied in the spilling of male blood. Based loosely on a brief newspaper account

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<sup>118</sup> 'Tragedia in three acts and seven scenes'. *Bodas de sangre* was Lorca's first major commercial success, and the most well-known of his plays according to Gwynne Edwards, (*Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 125). It premiered in March 1933 at Madrid's Beatriz Theatre and was directed by Lorca with set designs by Manuel Fontanals and Ontañón. Lorca was music director for Rivas Cherif's production of the play at the Principal Palace Theatre in Barcelona in November 1935, with Caballero designing the sets and Margarita Xirgu as the Mother. Lorca referred to this version as the play's real premiere due to the shift of focus from the Bride to the Mother as the central protagonist. See Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, pp. 78–80. George Richmond-Scott's adaptation of *Bodas de sangre* at the Clapham Omnibus Theatre in London in September 2018, which re-imagines the story in the Spanish population of London in 2018, continues this trend despite its marked diversion from the original play as it is related from the Mother's viewpoint. Other significant adaptations include Carlos Saura's and Antonio Gades's 1981 ballet film version and Paul Ortiz's film *La novia* (2015). *La novia* won Goyas for Luisa Gavasa's performance as the Mother and for Migue Amoedo's cinematography and captures the visceral emotional pain of the original play.

from July 1928 of a bride who eloped with another man before her wedding, the play relates the blood feud between two families which is reignited when the Bride absconds with her cousin's husband and ex-lover, Leonardo, and the Groom follows them to exact his revenge. The two men fight to the death and the Bride returns to her mother-in-law to be judged. Despite the importance of this climactic moment, the stabbing of the two men occurs offstage. What we do see is the Bride covered in their blood, a dramatic vision of material redness which conveys violence and violation and stands in contrast to Lorca's depictions of her bodily whiteness. This 'white' portrayal of the Bride is troubled further by her dialogue, in which she expresses her emotional pain in implicitly coloured, somatic terms such as bruising and rotting which contrasts with the portrayal of the 'whiteness' of her body. This discourse is echoed in the Mother's speech, as I explore in Chapter Three. Throughout the play Lorca pursues the visceral dimension of his theatre of poetry by creating a language of inner pain through bodily colour. If *Bodas de sangre* comprises the raw expression of female emotional suffering, then in *Yerma* (1934), '[un] poema trágico en tres actos y seis cuadros', this portrayal reaches its most potent form through a discourse of blood and milk.<sup>119</sup> One of Lorca's most powerful plays, *Yerma* narrates the eponymous protagonist's agonising struggle with infertility which culminates with the death of her husband, Juan, at her own hands. Lorca's depiction of Juan as depleted and lacking in vitality suggests that it is he who is infertile. By murdering her husband Yerma both destroys her chances of having a child and ends the terrible hope which stalks her. Whilst bodily colour initially seems less of a central focus in *Yerma*, her expression of emotional pain in terms of bodily colour is a core part of how Lorca communicates her inner reality. In Chapter Three I explore how the references to

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<sup>119</sup> 'A tragic poem in three acts and six scenes'. The premiere took place in December 1934 at the Teatro Español in Madrid with Rivas Cherif as director, Fontanals as set and costume designer, Caballero designing the poster, and Xirgu in the title role. The opening was marked by controversy as *Yerma* was seen as 'a potent statement on oppression and social discontent' thus dividing reviews 'around predictably partisan lines' with the Right speaking against it as 'a vulgar, blasphemous affront to decent people', (Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, pp. 88–89).

maternity found in the implicit colour of references to blood and milk in Yerma's dialogue echo her painful obsession with motherhood, and reinforce the searing pain of her lack, standing in contrast with the aridness of her body. Through these maternal colours Lorca exposes the raw desperation of infertility and the cruelty of a society in which women are defined by the reproductive capacities of their bodies, and captures the pain of a woman who is rendered infertile by honour.

Despite Lorca's aim of producing a less tragic play, *Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje de las flores* (1935), '[un] poema granadino del novecientos dividido en varios jardines, con escenas de canto y baile', is as potent an exploration of female suffering as *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma*.<sup>120</sup> However, in *Doña Rosita* we also find a more sustained exploration of one of the other central elements of Lorca's theatre of poetry: the staging of poetic symbols and themes in material form. The central plot revolves around a young woman, Rosita, who waits in vain for her fiancé's return from abroad. Rosita is left to her spinsterhood, having let life pass her by whilst she sought refuge in a world of illusion and refused to acknowledge the passing of time. The 'language of flowers' referred to in the title was 'a strictly conventionalised floral code of love in vogue since the early nineteenth

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<sup>120</sup> 'A nineteenth-century Granadan poem divided into various gardens, with scenes of song and dance'. The play's premiere in December 1935 at Barcelona's Principal Palace was again directed by Rivas Cherif with Fontanals as set designer and Xirgu as Rosita, revealing the depth of these working relationships. See Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, pp. 99–100.

century’ as Noël Valis notes.<sup>121</sup> This language of flowers takes two core forms which I will explore in terms of the role of object colour in Lorca’s theatre of poetry in Chapter Four: the mutable rose poem which recurs in different forms throughout the play and the ‘Lo que dicen las flores’ [What the Flowers Say] song in Act Two. Although the subtitle does not indicate a particular art form as inspiration, nevertheless Lorca’s aesthetic vision of the play is revealed in the title and subtitle by the references to ‘the language of flowers’ and the division of the play into ‘gardens’. Lorca’s stylistic vision – based on the mutable rose – incorporates characterisation, structure, and costume, and also shapes the dialogue through his creation of this language of flowers. Lorca divides the play into three temporally distinct acts which reflect the three stages of the rose’s life cycle: red as blood in the morning, redder still in the afternoon, and white and wilting as night falls. Lorca also uses the mutable rose poem in a structural way by repeatedly linking it to Rosita’s appearances on stage, and by using it to question Rosita’s location in the group of spinster sisters in Act Two. Lorca reinforces this parallel through Rosita’s costume. Her dresses fade from pink to pale pink and thence to white throughout the play, and the changing styles of her clothes (leg-of-mutton sleeves in Act One, a bell-shaped skirt in Act Two) evoke the shapes of blossoms or petals. I will explore and problematize the lack of redness in Rosita’s costumes in my discussion of the object colour in Chapter Four. Lorca uses the mutable rose motif to interweave the visual,

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<sup>121</sup> Noël Valis, ‘The Culture of Nostalgia, or the Language of Flowers’ in *The Culture of Cursilería: Bad Taste, Kitsch, and Class in Modern Spain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 244–76 (p. 255). Daniel Devoto suggests that Lorca’s source was probably *El lenguaje de las flores y de las frutas, con algunos emblemas de las piedras y los colores* (1857), written under the pseudonym Florencio Jazmín, ‘Doña Rosita la soltera: estructura y fuentes’, *Bulletin Hispanique*, 69 (1969), 407–35 (p. 420). Beverly Seaton contest the view that the language of flowers was a form of romantic communication with specific meanings, and argues that meanings varied from volume to volume and within ‘the strong tradition of using flowers in figurative ways [...] there is no consistent pattern of meanings attached to specific flowers beyond general connotations’. Beverly Seaton, *The Language of Flowers: A History* (London and Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2012), p. 60. Her study finds little evidence to suggest ‘that people actually used these symbolic lists to communicate’. Rather, these floral vocabularies ‘belong to a larger class of sentimental flower books’ in which flowers are treated ‘in terms of sentiment, feeling, and association’ rather than with regard to botany or horticulture, (p. 2). Indeed, ‘the changes that were made as the language of flowers migrated from France to England to America are instructive also of cultural differences that transcend the idea of a floral “alphabet of love”’, (p. 112).

verbal, and sensory elements of the work and to bring key symbols to the stage in material and structural form, a vision in which colour plays a central role. The language of flowers allows Rosita to express her emotional pain through a discourse of floral imagery which is centred on the blending of flowers and flesh, a different form of bodily wounding to *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma* but one which is equally powerful. Through the motif of flowers and their implicit colours Lorca creates a theatre of poetry which offers a searing critique of the common plight of unmarried women in early-twentieth-century Spain.

Lorca's last completed play *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) is his most frequently staged work.<sup>122</sup> It has often been invested with canonical status and has been viewed as the culmination of Lorca's theatre, despite the fact that it is only his final work due to his untimely death for he had more works in development, including *Comedia sin título*, as I discussed earlier. Whilst there has been much critical debate surrounding the level of realism of the play and the omission of verse, *Bernarda Alba* is a prime example of Lorca's theatre of poetry. It is also his most explicit and sustained engagement with material colour as part of the expression of these key ideas, which is why this play is the sole object of my analysis in Chapter Two. *Bernarda Alba* focuses on the eponymous Bernarda's tyrannical reign over her five daughters – Angustias (39), and her half-sisters Magdalena (30), Amelia (27), Martirio (24), and Adela (20) – and elderly mother María Josefa.<sup>123</sup> The recently widowed Bernarda and her family will now observe eight years of mourning inside the stifling white house. Her daughters will be virtual prisoners of the thick walls, the heat, and of Bernarda's ferocious obsession with honour and outward appearances which leads her to create a restricting

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<sup>122</sup> See Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 104. *Bernarda Alba* was first performed in March 1945 by Margarita Xirgu and her company at the Teatro Avenida in Buenos Aires with set designs by Santiago Ontañón. It enjoyed immediate success.

<sup>123</sup> In conversation with Carlos Morla Lynch in 1936, Lorca tells us that his play was inspired by a real-life family; a Doña Bernarda and her daughters were neighbours at the Lorca family's property in Valderrubio. See Carlos Morla Lynch, *En España con Federico García Lorca: páginas de un diario íntimo, 1928-1936*, 2nd edn (Madrid: Aguilar, 1958), pp. 488–89. Morris explores the origins of the characters and settings of the play in depth in *García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1990), pp. 11–31.

physical and emotional environment for her family. Within the pressure-cooker atmosphere of the house the sisters begin to turn against each other, fighting over Pepe el Romano who is engaged to Angustias but having an affair with Adela, and with whom Martirio is also infatuated. Catching Adela as she goes to meet Pepe, who we never see on stage in this exclusively female domain, Martirio raises the alarm and Bernarda aims at Pepe with her shotgun. She misses, but Martirio jealously tells Adela that Pepe is dead, and Adela hangs herself in the barn. Bernarda's last concern as the curtain falls is not that her youngest child is dead, but that everyone believe that Adela was still a virgin. Much has been made of Morla Lynch's account of Lorca's vision of the play. He tells us that in *Bernarda Alba* Lorca had 'exiled the poet within', stating 'ni una gota de poesia' [...] ¡Realidad! ¡Realismo puro!'<sup>124</sup> However, we know that the omission of verse in the play in exchange for a more understated language does not mean that Lorca was moving away from his theatre of poetry. Lorca's note on the character list – which tells us that the play is 'un documental fotográfico' – highlights the concept which will drive all the elements of the play, much like the *estampa* in *Mariana Pineda*, the *aleluya* in *Don Perlimplín*, and the mutable rose in *Doña Rosita*.<sup>125</sup> The documentary aesthetic is not a rejection of theatre of poetry but another important experiment with transferring poetry from page to stage and another aspect of multi-modality. In *Bernarda Alba* Lorca continues to communicate the inner worlds of his protagonists, their *reality*, through material colour. Throughout Chapter Two I probe how Lorca uses the marked contrast of the ascetic white set and black costumes with bursts of hued colour such as Adela's fan and her green dress to capture the conflict between Bernarda and her daughters, particularly Adela, and reflect in material form Bernarda's disturbing state of mind and Adela's growing desperation. Rather than a rejection of poetry, *Bernarda Alba* has theatre of poetry and colour at its very core.

<sup>124</sup> Cited in Herbert Ramsden, 'Introduction', in Federico García Lorca, *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), pp. vii–lix (p. xxix).

<sup>125</sup> 'A photographic documentary'.



## CHAPTER OUTLINES

In Chapter One I will situate my study within the context of colour scholarship in the arts and humanities in general and in Hispanic studies in particular. I will highlight the relative neglect of the affective capacity of colour in Hispanic studies and emphasise the need to engage with the growing trend of colour scholarship in French studies and in English, Irish, and American Modernist studies within our own field in ways which exceed colour symbolism. Through a close reading of the corpus and a consideration of affective, bodily, and material theories of colour, I will argue that a methodology centred on colour affect offers fresh insights into Lorca's theatre, especially his theatre of poetry, and addresses the critical lacuna identified in my review of the critical field in terms of the focus on colour symbolism and biography and the under-examination of implicit colour in studies of his plays.

Throughout my three analytical chapters I will consider the role of colour in Lorca's theatre of poetry, focusing on the ways in which the linguistic and the material elements of his plays work together and on his exploration of the inner worlds of his characters and what lies beneath the surface. In Chapter Two I will probe how Lorca uses a white-colour dichotomy in terms of both dialogue and staging to explore the emotions and key concerns of his protagonists in *Bernarda Alba*. I will argue that *Bernarda Alba* is a play in which Lorca focuses on the theatrical possibilities of colour and on a probing of colour and emotional states that is much more complex and extreme than in earlier works. Thus *Bernarda Alba* provides an important starting point for a re-consideration of colour in Lorca's theatre as part of his theatre of poetry in terms of my three core research questions surrounding his communication of the inner worlds of his characters, the creation of a holistic theatre experience in which the visual and the verbal elements mutually reflect each other, and the materialisation of poetic themes and symbols in the staging. I will draw on the artist and

colour-writer David Batchelor's concept of 'chromophobia' to explore Bernarda's fear and loathing of colour as represented by her visceral rejection of the red-and-green fan in Act One.<sup>126</sup> Inspired by Batchelor's concept, I seek to address more fully the array of emotions that colour in Lorca's theatre brings to the surface. I will argue that Lorca centres the aesthetics of the play on Bernarda's obsession with whiteness and her loathing of colour as a visual corollary of her symbolic association of white with purity, and colour with sin and dishonour. This dynamic is shown through the contrasting motifs of cleaning and staining, thus reflecting the central concerns of the play on the material stage. I will show how Lorca draws the audience into Bernarda's inner world by using the colour of the sets to represent her warped vision of colour and society, which is shaped by absence and sensory deprivation. Guided by Emma Wilson's discussion of visual colour and psychological trauma in Krzysztof Kieślowski's 1993 film *Three Colours: Blue*, I will explore the representation of Bernarda's reactions to colour as the visual indication of psychological disturbance, suggesting that Wilson's approach can help us shed light on the way Lorca uses visual colour to portray Bernarda's disturbed psyche.<sup>127</sup> I will argue that Lorca highlights the disturbed nature of Bernarda's views on colour and society by offering Adela's chromatic desire as a disruptive, pleasurable counterpoint which is what lies beneath the façade of whiteness and respectability. I will explore 'chromatic desire' as both the visual representation of Adela's desire for sexual and physical freedom – represented by the green dress – and as an orgasmic, eruptive force. Bernarda's attempted negation of her family's chromatic desire causes that desire to build in intensity throughout the play. I will argue that Roland Barthes's concept of bliss, *jouissance*, a disruptive and ecstatic state of affective impact, offers us a deeper understanding of chromatic desire and helps us to appreciate Lorca's powerful yet sparse use of colour as a dramatic device. The impact of colour in *Bernarda Alba* as a theatrical device

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<sup>126</sup> David Batchelor, *Chromophobia* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), p. 22.

<sup>127</sup> Emma Wilson, 'Three Colours: Blue: Kieślowski, Colour and the Postmodern Subject', *Screen*, 39.4 (1998), 349–62.

lies paradoxically in its scarcity; colour is something which can mentally ‘lacerate’ and is perpetually in motion, appearing fleetingly like an ‘apparition’, a ‘pinprick’, a ‘closing eyelid’ and which can have the effect of the punctum.<sup>128</sup> The punctum is the sharp affective power of a small photographic detail which leaves us wounded, emotionally moved, and brings us closer to the subject in the image as it leaps out at us from the frame and ‘pricks’ us. I will demonstrate that the scarcity of colour and the dominance of whiteness in the play imbue colour with an eruptive and disruptive value for the audience when it does emerge, creating a greater affective impact and enhancing the theatrical possibilities of colour in Lorca’s ideas of a theatre of poetry.

In Chapter Three I will explore Lorca’s aim of exposing the truth beneath the surface of his characters’ daily lives as part of his theatre of poetry through a different lens, that of colour and corporeality. I will begin by considering the trope of female bodily whiteness in *El maleficio*, *Mariana Pineda*, *Don Perlimplín*, and *Bodas de sangre* as a parallel to the façade of whiteness in the settings of *Bernarda Alba*. Drawing on Richard Dyer’s discussion of the conflation between whiteness as symbol, skin colour, and hue in Western visual culture, I will argue that, like the superficial whiteness of Bernarda’s world, the symbolic values of these white bodies give way to a more equivocal portrayal, especially in the contrast Lorca creates between the Bride’s ‘whiteness’ and portrayals of her olive skin and bloodied clothes and hair in *Bodas de sangre*. Just as Lorca uses material colour to bring key concerns to the physical stage and to capture his characters’ emotions in visual form in *Bernarda Alba*, he achieves a similar effect through his discourse of bodily wounding throughout his theatre, both in the dialogue of his female characters and in the stabbing of his male protagonists. This is the ‘bones-and-blood’ of Lorca’s theatre of poetry; he uses the assault on the body’s

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<sup>128</sup> Roland Barthes, ‘Cy Twombly: Works on Paper’, in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art and Representation*, trans. by Richard Howard (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 157–76 (p. 166).

surface, both metaphorical and literal, to penetrate the superficial layer of appearance and expose the visceral reality beneath. My analysis of the Bride's bodily colour leads me to consider how a metaphorical discourse of bodily wounding in the dialogue of female characters including the Bride and the Mother in *Bodas de sangre* and Yerma in *Yerma*, and the associated implicit colours of flesh, bruises, blushing, teeth, burns, sores, urine, rotting, and blood, offers insight into their inner emotional states. The speech of Yerma and the Mother reveals a focus on patterns of maternal colour, particularly the implicit colours of blood in both plays and milk in the latter. I will move away from the idea that Yerma is an intersexual or androgynous figure, arguing that this play is very much about the maternal body and what it means to be a woman.<sup>129</sup> Drawing on Carol Mavor's reading of the 'bruising' impact of the filmic or photographic image, I will examine how these depictions create a similarly lingering affective impact on the audience. I will explore how these motifs allow Lorca to communicate Yerma's private pain and the recurring tension between love and honour in his works and I will consider whether these poetic symbols would have greater potency in Lorca's vision of a theatre of poetry if they were also reflected in the material staging. My discussion of colour and corporeality as the expression of emotional pain finds a different form in Lorca's representation of male suffering in *Don Perlimplín*, *Así que pasen*, *El público*, and *Bodas de sangre*. In contrast to the discourse of wounding in the female characters' dialogue, the suffering of the male characters in these plays is explored through a physical assault on the body and a 'literal' piercing of flesh. Whilst colour may appear to be a subsidiary focus in these portrayals, the motif of spilled blood and its implicit redness is central to this penetration of the male body and is invested with kinaesthetic as well as intersensory values. Lorca's critique of the toxic effects of rigid gender roles on his female characters is complemented by the deaths of male characters, for example Perlimplín in *Don*

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<sup>129</sup> See Smith, *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, pp. 16–43.

*Perlimplín*, the Novio and Leonardo in *Bodas de sangre*, the Young Man in *Así que pasen*, and the Red Nude and First Man in *El público*. *El público* is also marked by a consistent discourse of violence against the male body, representing Lorca's most sustained engagement with this theme. I will probe how these bloody deaths shed light on the subjectivities of male characters and comprise an equally powerful critique of the effects of male gender roles. I will compare the off-stage versus on-stage nature of the deaths of these male characters, building on my discussion of female bodily wounding by asking whether the presence of material redness on stage comprises a more successful theatre of poetry than a merely verbal or aural representation. In this analysis, I will examine the 'puncturing' impact of these portrayals of male stabbing on the audience. Developing the idea of colour as disruptive and blissful, in the Barthesian sense, in my discussion of the affective power of colour in *Bernarda Alba*, I will argue that the emotive 'piercing' impact of photography that Barthes describes in his theory of the punctum makes possible a new reading of the affective power of representations of colour and corporeality in Lorca's theatre of poetry. My discussion of the 'piercing' effect of the stabbing of the male body and the motif of blood leads me to consider the equally startling impact of anti-mimetic bodily colour and costumes in *El público* and in *Así que pasen*. Drawing on queer theory and the deconstruction of rigid gender boundaries, I will suggest that the combined effect of these portrayals of bodily colour and inner truths in Lorca's theatre of poetry is a call for a more equivocal understanding of the body, a queering through material colour, and is a powerful critique of the effects of the social constructs of gender.

Chapter Four builds further on the role that colour plays in Lorca's exposure of the inner reality of his characters and the importance of implicit colour in his theatre of poetry. I will explore how Lorca 'makes poetry flesh' through an analysis of object colour in his staging, in terms of props, sets, lighting, and costume. I will begin with a consideration of

how Rosita embodies the motif of the mutable rose in *Doña Rosita*, exploring and problematizing the role of the colours of her costumes in this visual and verbal alignment and considering the role of ‘the language of flowers’ indicated in the title to communicate Rosita’s inner reality. My discussion of the corporeal and sensory dimension of Rosita’s portrayal and the importance of material colour in her costume leads me to consider the role of the implicitly yellow quince motif in Act One of *Mariana Pineda* in terms of theatre of poetry. I also probe the ways in which Lorca reflects the central *estampa* aesthetic in the colours of the sets, the lighting, and Mariana’s costumes. Throughout my analysis of *Doña Rosita* and *Mariana Pineda* I will extend Elaine Scarry’s concept of mental re-creation, where the literary text acts as a set of instructions for the reader in order to re-form these images in their own imagination,<sup>130</sup> and Laura Marks’s discussion of ‘haptic visuality’, or the ‘tactile’ values of the filmic image, to the study of theatre.<sup>131</sup> This will enable me to probe how Lorca creates a sensory experience through a jointly visual and verbal medium. These concepts allow me to consider how effective Lorca’s use of verbal colour is in these plays in terms of his theatre of poetry. In my discussion of how Lorca makes poetry flesh through material colour in *Don Perlimplín* I will examine how Lorca uses the green frock coat, the golden antlers, the red velvet cape, and the implicitly green emerald dagger to represent Perlimplín’s transformation from a stock character to a protagonist of bones-and-blood in visual terms. This discussion inspires my consideration of the role of costume colour in *La zapatera*, especially Lorca’s elevation of the Shoemaker’s Wife from a stock character to a protagonist of ‘bones-and-blood’. I will examine the contrast that Lorca creates between the Shoemaker’s Wife and characters like Don Mirlo and the female neighbours through her dialogue, movement, and vibrant personified costumes. Throughout Chapter Four I will bring forward my ideas surrounding the affective capacity of colour explored in my discussions of

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<sup>130</sup> See Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999).

<sup>131</sup> See Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

*jouissance*, the punctum, and emotional bruising in the preceding chapters to enhance my exploration of the ways in which Lorca brings poetry to the stage in material form. I will demonstrate how colour acts as an intermediary between the verbal and visual aspects of Lorca's plays and empowers his experiments with bringing poetry from the page to the stage.

The Conclusion will reflect on the findings of the thesis and the overall significance that theories of affective, bodily, and material colour offer for an understanding of Lorca's theatre. It will consider the latest scholarship emerging in the field and suggest ways in which the line of research proposed by this thesis could be taken forward. Through a probing of the affective, bodily, and material experiences of colour in Lorca's plays I aim to shed light on his theatre of poetry and to offer new ways of engaging with colour in Hispanic studies, and visual and literary studies in the arts more generally, which provide a fuller understanding of the possibilities of material colour as an aesthetic resource.

## **Chapter One: Colour Foundations**

This chapter explores the ways in which different ideas surrounding colour – in the fields of philosophy, film studies, literature, material culture, and art, amongst others – provide a methodology for my reading of colour in Lorca's theatre. I aim to re-situate the study of Lorca's theatre in a wider context of readings of colour in the arts and humanities. I will explore readings of colour which exceed the focus on colour symbolism, in order to probe the psychological, embodied, and material aspects of Lorca's colour-work in his theatre of poetry. I will consider how colour scholarship in British, Irish, American, and French literary and visual culture invites us to re-think colour in Hispanic studies, and how my thesis addresses this critical gap. Finally, I will examine the methodologies for each of my three chapters of textual analysis and for the thesis as a whole.

### **COLOUR SCHOLARSHIP IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

My study occurs within a context of cultural approaches to reading material, visual, and verbal colour in the arts and humanities. These approaches span: the tracing of the history of colour (John Gage, Michel Pastoureau); the consideration of the postcolonial or racial freight of colour (Michael Taussig, Natasha Eaton, Richard Dyer); an engagement with early colour cinema, particularly in a British context (Sarah Street, Joshua Yumibe); the consideration of colour in screen studies (Emma Wilson, Georgina Evans, Liz Watkins); and intermedial studies which merge cultural studies with creative writing (Carol Mavor). Scholarship which focuses on colour in twentieth-century literary and visual culture beyond traditional symbolism includes Amanda Dackombe's thesis on colour as the visual representation of thought in British and Irish Modernist literature (2003); Françoise Meltzer on Stéphane



Mallarmé's use of white (1978); Susan Harrow on modern and contemporary French poetry and fiction (2004, 2011, 2012, 2017); Eric Robertson on white in modern French poetry and art (2017); and Nicholas Gaskill's monograph on American literature and the modernization of colour (2018). The 2017 special issue of *French Studies* 'Thinking Colour-Writing', edited by Harrow, points to a flourishing field of critical colour studies in nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century French literary and visual culture which offers a methodology for addressing the current lacuna of material and affective colour scholarship in Hispanic studies.

Amanda Dackombe's and Françoise Meltzer's studies both explore the relationship between colour and cognition. Rather than focusing on the symbolic or decorative values of colour, Dackombe's study reveals the relationship between colour and the communication of complex philosophical and subjective concerns in British and Irish Modernist literature. I will consider the role of colour as the visual expression of ultra-linguistic inner states in my discussion of psychological reactions to colour in *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) in Chapter Two, and in my analysis of corporeal colour as representative of emotional pain in *Bodas de sangre* (1932) and *Yerma* (1934) in Chapter Three. In her analysis of Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Samuel Beckett, and T. S. Eliot, Dackombe argues that colour 'makes thought visible' and provides 'a new way of engagement with recent research into theoretical comparisons between thinking, writing and visual arts'.<sup>1</sup> Her examination of subjectivity and colour in Woolf's writing explores borderline experiences and the importance of colour as a 'state of mind' in *The Years* (1937), in which colour 'feeds into

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<sup>1</sup> Amanda Marie Dackombe, *Making Thought Visible: Colour in the Writings of Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Samuel Beckett and T.S. Eliot* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen Mary University of London, London, 2003), p. 1.

both aesthetic exploration and a more personal, autobiographical drama'.<sup>2</sup> Richardson's use of colour in *Pilgrimage*, her series of thirteen novels published between 1915 and 1967, reveals a focus on a gendered exploration of colour, particularly her use of gold as 'the colour through which [the protagonist] Miriam's consciousness visualises its transformative potential'.<sup>3</sup> Here, Richardson creates a contrast between Miriam's abstract vision of goldness and the motif of men unconsciously weaving 'golden things' and becoming 'alienated from the products of [their] labour'.<sup>4</sup> In turn, Beckett's colour practice has a 'hallucinatory' quality and colour 'activates the "anxiety" that, for Beckett, governs all subject and object relations and the gulf between inwardness and exteriority'.<sup>5</sup> For example in 'Yellow', a short story published in *More Pricks than Kicks* (1934), Beckett uses the colour yellow in multi-faceted ways to explore death and memory, opening up a 'coloured plane' in which yellowness 'takes the place of [the] void – of a missing originally repressed representation'.<sup>6</sup> In each of these writers Dackombe finds a preoccupation with 'a notion of "unspeakable" elements of experience' which is 'explored in relation to thought processes, the creative predicament, and ontological doubt'.<sup>7</sup> Dackombe's consideration of how British and Irish Modernist writers use colour to represent ultra-linguistic experiences and ontological concerns, and to express patterns and processes of private consciousness, highlights the links between colour practice and the expression of complex mental states.

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<sup>2</sup> Dackombe, p. 50. See also Amy Rosen, *The Pulse of Colour: A Study of Virginia Woolf* (unpublished doctoral thesis, State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, 1981) which explores the links between colour, emotion, and sensation in the novels *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *The Waves* (1931) through a focus on yellow, green, violet, and red respectively. Rosen argues that Woolf 'purposefully chooses the tints and shades and manifestations that have the closest emotional connotation with her expressive idea' and to communicate the characters' inner journeys, (Rosen, p. 76).

<sup>3</sup> Dackombe, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Dackombe, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> Dackombe, p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> Dackombe, p. 144. Lucy Jeffery reads Beckett's use of blue in his late prose text *Company* (1980) as similarly linked to the processes of memory. She also examines the painterly aesthetic of his writing. See Lucy Jeffery, 'Samuel Beckett's Use of Color in *Company*: Blue', *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, 20.4 (2018), 507–526.

<sup>7</sup> Dackombe, p. 9.

The relationship between colour and thought in nineteenth-century French Symbolist poetry is the central concern of Françoise Meltzer's article, a study which foreshadows the growing strength of material and affective colour criticism in modern and contemporary French studies. Meltzer's study highlights colour's possibilities as a mode of artistic thought and of affective expression. Her probing of Mallarmé's colour practice reveals the formal, linguistic, and sensory possibilities of colour and captures the complex relationship between colour and thought in Symbolist poetry, which acts as an important precursor to the anti-mimetic concerns and formal experimentation of Modernism. Meltzer also captures the important role of implicit renderings of colour, which I argue is a neglected aspect of Lorca's work that needs to be considered in order to provide a fuller understanding of his colour practice and to address the importance of object colour in his theatre. Meltzer suggests that the centrality of colour in Symbolism is more than 'an aesthetic preference or mere poetic technique'; rather, the synaesthetic and sensory values of this colour practice demonstrate 'the paradigmatic literary expression of a general spiritual crisis – a crisis in epistemology'.<sup>8</sup> Colour becomes a challenge to form through abstraction. It is used as 'an adjective modifying an intangible', as we see reoccur in Lorca's unusual colour metaphors in *Mariana Pineda* (1925) which I discuss in Chapter Four, or is granted human characteristics.<sup>9</sup> Colour is also indirectly alluded to. Implicit colour is used in conjunction with colour adjectives to create an 'accumulative effect', such as in Mallarmé's 'nuit blanche de glaçons et de neige cruelle' in 'Herodias' (1864) where the explicit whiteness of 'night' is emphasised by the whiteness associated with 'icicles' and 'snow'.<sup>10</sup> I trace the similarly incremental effect of whiteness in *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two where the material colour of the set is reflected in allusions to

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<sup>8</sup> Françoise Meltzer, 'Color as Cognition in Symbolist Verse', *Critical Inquiry*, 5.2 (1978), 253–73, (pp. 253–54).

<sup>9</sup> Meltzer, p. 257.

<sup>10</sup> Meltzer, p. 257. 'White night of icicles and of cruel snow'. For further discussion of Mallarmé's use of white, see Eric Robertson, "'Le blanc souci de notre toile": Writing White in Modern French Poetry and Art', *French Studies*, 71.3 (2017), 319–32 (pp. 321–23).

white objects in the dialogue. In Mallarmé's sonnet of the swan (1885), the white swan melts into the background of the winter landscape, its form lost in an abstraction of white on white, and the named object is revealed to be illusory.<sup>11</sup> Meltzer suggests that what she calls the 'failed' Symbolist project of a *poésie pure*, which is centred on hermeticism, linguistic distortions, abstractionism, and musicality, finds its potential vehicle in colour due to the way it both slips away from linguistic expression and turns sensory values into abstraction.<sup>12</sup>

Susan Harrow's work on the relationship between literary and visual culture in modern and contemporary French poetry and fiction also comprises a sustained engagement with the possibilities of a reading of colour which exceeds nominal or symbolic values. In her 2004 monograph *The Material, The Real and the Fractured Self*, Harrow explores the use of sublime material colour in Jacques Réda's colour practice, and considers how it creates a state of oceanic, mesmerizing consciousness which grants a temporary reprieve from the pressures of the quotidian and of selfhood.<sup>13</sup> Her 2011 article 'Zola: Colorist, Abstractionist' examines the 'intermedial capacity' of Émile Zola's writing, whilst continuing to move away from a traditional ekphrastic approach.<sup>14</sup> Harrow's analysis of the chromatic values of landscape in *The Joy of Life* (1884) and seascape in *The Earth* (1887) 'shift[s] the focus from Zola's engagement with the visual medium of Manet and his followers in order to explore Zola's work as a colorist and abstractionist *in his own medium*'.<sup>15</sup> Building on the idea of the subjective freight of colour, Harrow suggests that, in these later novels, Zola's colour abstraction 'reflect[s] and generates[s] affect that frequently shapes affirmative or meliorative phases in the writing' and reveals 'a characteristically Zolian paradox where prismatic beauty

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<sup>11</sup> Meltzer, p. 263.

<sup>12</sup> Meltzer, p. 260.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter Four of Susan Harrow, *The Material, the Real, and the Fractured Self: Subjectivity and Representation from Rimbaud to Réda* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004). See also Michael Sheringham's posthumously published collection of essays in which he examines the themes of love, colour, motion, the city, and the senses in nineteenth- and twentieth-century French poetry. Michael Sheringham, *Perpetual Motion: Studies in French Poetry from Surrealism to the Postmodern* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Susan Harrow, 'Zola: Colorist, Abstractionist', *Romanic Review*, 102.3-4 (2011), 465-84 (p. 466).

<sup>15</sup> Harrow, 'Zola: Colorist, Abstractionist', p. 466. Original emphasis.

arises out of fracture'.<sup>16</sup> I consider the affective impact of colour on Lorca's audience and characters throughout my thesis, particularly as a disquieting, explosive force or a piercing, wounding power through my discussions of *jouissance* and the punctum. Harrow's reading also draws our attention to the space of reception and to the effects that Zola's colour-writing has on the characters and on the reader, leading us to consider the active values of colour. Yet as well as the material movement of colour – the way colour moves between saturation and scarcity – Harrow highlights other key colour processes: writing colour and reading colour. Colour moves in labile and autonomous ways, as I will explore in my discussion of fading and of the kinesthetic properties of blood in Chapter Three. In her 2012 article 'Colorsteps in Modern and Contemporary French Poetry', Harrow focuses on this complex process of writing and reading colour in poetry. She argues that these verbal renderings of colour are both inherently visual and material and draws our attention to the subjective nature of both writing and reading colour; as these works 'articulat[e] the writer's subjective responses, so [they] shap[e] the reader's reception in ricochets of affect'.<sup>17</sup> As well as a re-thinking of the word and image hierarchy, Harrow's work focuses on the material and affective values of colour, particularly the processes of writing colour and of reader reception. In Chapter Four I will consider how Lorca's colour-writing encourages acts of mental re-creation and chromatic re-imagining and how effective these mental images are in his theatre of poetry.

Despite research into visual practices in the literary text, Harrow and the contributors of the 2017 special issue of *French Studies* on 'Thinking Colour-Writing' suggest that the colour capacity of literary texts remains an undernourished and even occluded area of the

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<sup>16</sup> Harrow, 'Zola: Colorist, Abstractionist', p. 483. Julia Kristeva finds this majestic yet disruptive and fragmentary experience of colour in her discussion of Giotto's blue frescoes at the Arena Chapel in Padua. Here blueness constitutes both a 'threat' to the self and 'the self's attempted reconstitution', and suspends the observer between the instinctual drives of self-preservation and self-destruction, 'Giotto's Joy', in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), pp. 210–6, (p. 220). Here, colour becomes 'blissful' in the Barthesian sense, 'shattering unity' and leading to a 'deep ideological and subjective transformation' on the part of the viewer, ('Giotto's Joy', p. 224).

<sup>17</sup> Susan Harrow, 'Colorsteps in Modern and Contemporary French Poetry', *French Forum*, 37.1-2 (2012), 35–52.

study of modern and contemporary French poetry and narrative, despite their ‘sustained relation to visual practice in forms and formats’.<sup>18</sup> This neglect stands in contrast to the increasingly interdisciplinary state of arts and humanities research.<sup>19</sup> In ‘Colorsteps’, Harrow highlighted the paradoxical neglect of colour in poetry criticism, particularly given its status as ‘an important space of coincidence and difference between verbal and visual media’, a critical oversight which she finds is still dominant in 2017. This underexplored area is the main focus of the ‘Thinking Colour-Writing’ special issue. Harrow builds on her exploration of colour-in-writing and readerly affect in her previous work and considers the acts of writing colour by modern writers and readers’ response to ‘the invitation to *think colour*’ as they read, drawing our attention to the complex and interactive nature of the reader’s colour experience.<sup>20</sup> Each of the five contributors in ‘Thinking Colour-Writing’ are ‘alert to the disruptive and transformational agency of colour’, and work ‘to reveal the ceaseless potential of colour-writing to break free from traditional and symbolic recuperations’.<sup>21</sup> Harrow’s concern that literary colour study in French tends to ‘default to invocations of traditional colour symbolism and has, at times, limited its scope to statistical analyses of chromatic frequencies’ is significant when we consider the current state of Lorca colour studies.<sup>22</sup> ‘Thinking Colour-Writing’ also points to a growing field of critical colour studies in French literary and visual culture which does not have a counterpart in Hispanic studies more broadly.

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<sup>18</sup> Susan Harrow, ‘Thinking Colour-Writing: Introduction’, *French Studies*, 71.3 (2017), 307–18 (p. 307).

<sup>19</sup> Harrow, ‘Thinking Colour-Writing: Introduction’, p. 307.

<sup>20</sup> Harrow, ‘Thinking Colour-Writing: Introduction’, p. 307.

<sup>21</sup> Harrow, ‘Thinking Colour-Writing: Introduction’, p. 318. In her article on Francophone writer Marie NDiaye in this special issue, Shirley Jordan explores the ways in which NDiaye uses colour to offer an insight into the inner world of her protagonists. She argues that ‘colour perception is often used as a way of illustrating the theory of qualia, that is, the non-linguistic, private, and subjective experience each of us has of the world that is precisely unshareable and individual’, ‘Washes and Hues: Reading for Colour in Marie NDiaye’, *French Studies*, 71.3 (2017), 362–73, (p. 370). Jordan’s reading of colour as the communication of private subjective states in the essay *The Shipwrecked Woman* (1999) and the novels *Rosie Carpe* (2001) and *Self-portrait in Green* (2006) demonstrates the possibilities of using colour to explore subjective states. I also explore the connections between colour and the psyche in my own study, particularly in my discussion of whiteness and hued colour in *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two.

<sup>22</sup> Harrow, ‘Thinking Colour-Writing: Introduction’, p. 308.

Nicholas Gaskill's 2018 study of the modernization of colour in twentieth-century Modernist American Literature emphasises the experiential and material capacities of Modernist colour-writing and moves away from symbolic recuperations by taking a more sociohistorical approach. He considers how core developments in colour theory and production – particularly 'the relational theory of color perception, the success of aniline dyes, and the trainable color sense' – are reflected in contemporary literature, arguing that this literature 'offer[s] unique insights into the historical experience of colour'.<sup>23</sup> In his exploration of local colour writer Hamlin Garland's work, Gaskill examines how Garland looked back to the painterly origins of the genre, finding in Impressionism 'a paradigm for reconfiguring place in literature as a matter of perception' which led him to create an 'immersive, embodied vision' of colour which was rooted in modern colour perception.<sup>24</sup> This privileging of abstract colour created 'a strange affinity between progressive reform and modernist abstraction' which is embodied in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story 'The Yellow Wall-Paper' (1892). 'The Yellow Wall-Paper' is the story of a woman's psychological illness which is conveyed through her reactions to the yellow wallpaper of her room, engaging with '[the creation of] psychological effects through chromatic arrangements'.<sup>25</sup> Gaskill suggests that in this work Perkins Gilman 'sought to convey the social conditions and cognitive habits that give a perception its unique quality' as she 'invests her yellow with a political charge [...] by figuring the debilitating conditions of the "rest

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<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Gaskill, *Chromographia: American Literature and the Modernization of Color* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), p. 31 and p. 38. Also see Gaskill's work on the role of colour-music in exploring the cultural freight of abstract colour at the turn of the twentieth century: 'The Articulate Eye: Color-Music, the Color Sense, and the Language of Abstraction', *Configurations*, 25.4 (2017), 475–505.

<sup>24</sup> Gaskill, p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> Gaskill, p. 80. For further discussion of the psychological impact of yellow in this work, see Lorelee MacPike, 'Environment as Psychopathological Symbolism in *The Yellow Wallpaper*', *American Literary Realism 1870-1910*, 8.3 (1975), 286–88. In contrast, in her analysis of Sylvia Plath's novel *The Bell Jar* (1963), Rosa Muñoz Luna explores the decolouration of the protagonist Esther's material environment as indicative of her faltering mental state in 'The Bell Jar: Towards a Fading of Mind and Colour', *Babel*, 17 (2008), 99–13. This correlation between whiteness and mental illness reminds us of Bernarda's projection of her extreme moral values onto the white house in Lorca's *Bernarda Alba*, as I probe in Chapter Two.

cure” through colour.<sup>26</sup> Whilst Perkins Gilman’s view of colour as a tool for change is markedly different to Lorca’s exploration of the experience of colour, her engagement with material colour and mental illness in ‘The Yellow Wall-Paper’ offers an important parallel to my discussion of whiteness in *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two. Throughout his study, Gaskill also finds that ‘an increasingly complicated relationship between modernist style and racialized understandings of color sensitivity’ begins to emerge in the re-appropriation of ‘primitive’ bright colours for white children in the illustrations of L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900); the imbrication of the ‘flamboyant color figurations of the avant-garde’ and the ‘chromatic constructions of racial discourse’ in Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) ; and the “challenge” of color to white civilisation’ captured in the late 1920s novels of the Harlem Renaissance.<sup>27</sup> Whilst I do not engage directly with race in my thesis, I explore the ‘primitive’ values of colour in my discussion of Bernarda’s chromophobia in Chapter Two and examine Lorca’s troubling of the conflation between positive symbolic values and female corporeal whiteness in Chapter Three. What Gaskill’s study offers us is a detailed demonstration of the sociohistorical, empirical, and cognitive capacities of colour and the ways in which Modernist writers seek to capture these perceptions and sensations in their colour-writing. Far from a purely symbolic phenomenon, colour is rooted in psychological and embodied experiences.

## COLOUR SCHOLARSHIP IN HISPANIC STUDIES

The focus on traditional symbolic values of colour which we find in Lorca studies is reflected in Hispanic colour studies as a whole. This is particularly noticeable more broadly in twentieth-century Spanish theatre studies, including Alicia Gallego Zarzosa’s 2009 reading of

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<sup>26</sup> Gaskill, pp. 82–83.

<sup>27</sup> Gaskill, pp. 39–40.



Valle-Inclán's *Divinas palabras* (1919) [Divine Words], and articles by Henryk Ziomek (1970) and S. Carl King (1973) on Alejandro Casona's *La dama del alba* (1944) [The Lady of the Dawn] and *La sirena varada* (1934) [The Beached Mermaid] respectively.<sup>28</sup> Whilst studies by John London and María Vilches de Frutos offer us a concise overview of early-twentieth-century Spanish staging, in-depth analyses of the colour-work of individual Modernist Spanish playwrights currently represent a critical lacuna in Hispanic studies.<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Drumm's 2010 monograph *Painting on Stage: Visual Art in Twentieth-Century Spanish Theater* probes the reciprocity of art and theatre in the works of figures including Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Rafael Alberti, and Antonio Buero Vallejo, yet a focus on colour, particularly in its own right, is still lacking.<sup>30</sup> Emilio Peral Vega's 2016 study of Catalan playwright Adrià Gual is a welcome exception to the focus on colour symbolism in Hispanic theatre studies, and highlights the possibilities for tackling this critical gap. Peral Vega focuses on the plays *Black and White* (1894), *Nocturne. Andante. Purple* (1895), with which Gual's scenic theory was published as a prologue, and *Silence (Drama of the World)* (1898). In his article, Peral Vega considers Gual's use of colour within a wider exploration of Gual's and Edward Gordon Craig's staging, in which 'luz, color, palabra, música, actitud corporal, escenografía, vestuario [son] entendidos como un todo armónico y no como mero soporte a la

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<sup>28</sup> See Alicia Gallego Zarzosa, 'El simbolismo de la luz y el color en *Divinas palabras*', *Espéculo*, 43 (2009), no pagination; S. Carl King, 'Symbolic Use of Color in Casona's *La sirena varada*', *Romance Notes*, 15.2 (1973), 226–29; and Henryk Ziomek, 'El simbolismo del blanco en *La casa de Bernarda Alba* y en *La dama del alba*', *Symposium*, 24.1 (1970), 81–85.

<sup>29</sup> See John London 'Twentieth-Century Spanish Stage Design', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 7.3 (1998) 25–56 and María Francisca Vilches de Frutos, 'Directors of the Twentieth-Century Spanish Stage', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 7.3 (1997–8), 1–23. London argues that Spanish stage design was unoriginal and hindered by the late appearance of electric lighting technology in Madrid and by a reliance on static painted backdrops. This still remained the norm in 1920s Spain, (p. 35). He suggests that Catalan playwright Apel·les Mestres's disgust with mid-nineteenth century Catalan stage design was equally applicable to Spanish scenography more generally: The wretched "green room" – for modern plays, the ridiculous "gothic room" – for medieval ones, the "Greek temple", which had very little to do with a temple or anything Greek about it [...] and all this invariably focused in the same way – with the viewpoint located in the centre', (p. 26).

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Drumm, *Painting on Stage: Visual Art in Twentieth Century Spanish Theater* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2010).

palabra emitida por el actor’.<sup>31</sup> Peral Vega sees connections between Gual’s and Lorca’s colour practice. He suggests that in Gual’s plays colour forms part of the expression of an interior mental world or ‘verdad interior’ and ‘parte esencial del estado del alma de los personajes’, which immediately reminds him of the ‘lente surrealista como filtro’ in Lorca’s *El público* (1930).<sup>32</sup> The idea of colour as communicating the private inner world of the characters is central to my discussions of Lorca’s theatre of poetry in *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two and the *Bride*, the *Mother*, and *Yerma* in Chapter Three. Peral Vega also sees similarities between Lorca’s use of colour in *Amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (1925) and Gual’s predilection for ‘la coloración antimimética de los objetos que pueblan la escena con un procedimiento simbólico’.<sup>33</sup> Anti-mimetic colour recurs in Lorca’s exploration of corporeal colour in *El público* and *Así que pasen cinco años* (1931) as part of his creation of a de-realized spectating experience and his queering of the body in his theatre of poetry, as I will argue in Chapter Three. In Gual’s *Black and White* the use of the colour white evokes the aesthetic of Lorca’s *Bernarda Alba* which forms the basis of my discussion in Chapter Two. In *Black and White* ‘el apartamiento del carácter referencialista viene pautado por un cromatismo dual llevado al extremo’, and the extreme nature of this chiaroscuro contrast challenges reality: ‘la ambientación, en apariencia realista, pierde su condición de tal a partir del juego cromático blanco-negro aplicado a cada uno de los objetos que pueblan el

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<sup>31</sup> Emilio Peral Vega, ‘Dos visionarios en escena: Edward Gordon Craig y Adrià Gual’, *Hispanic Research Journal*, 17.6 (2016), 489–503 (p. 490). ‘Light, colour, word, music, bodily attitude, scenography, costume – all understood as a harmonic whole and not as a mere support to the word uttered by the actor’. Here, Gual evokes Lorca’s own views on the role of colour in the theatrical performances. Lorca saw colour as a central aspect of the play and not as a merely decorative element: ‘la mitad del espectáculo depende del ritmo, *del color*, de la escenografía’. ‘Half of the spectacle depends on the rhythm, *the colour*, the scenography’, (*Prosa* 1, p. 675). My emphasis in both quotations.

<sup>32</sup> Peral Vega, ‘Dos visionarios en escena’, p. 490. ‘Interior truth’, ‘an essential part of the state of the soul of the characters’, ‘Surrealist lens as a filter’.

<sup>33</sup> Peral Vega, ‘Dos visionarios en escena’, p. 492. ‘The anti-mimetic colouring of the objects which populate the scene in a symbolic way’.

escenario'.<sup>34</sup> White is also important in *Nocturne*: 'todo está dominado por un tono blanco [...] que multiplica su significado sinestésico a medida que nos adentramos en el conflicto dramático'.<sup>35</sup> In these examples of Gual's theatre, colour is integral to his goal of theatrical synthesis, as well as a way of focusing 'la mirada del espectador en la superficie central'.<sup>36</sup> *Nocturne* reveals Gual's preoccupation with how colour brings the visual elements of the performance together and with the correspondence between colour and music. The play is dominated visually by purple which 'englobará el conjunto', including 'los elementos pintados', 'las luces que se apliquen' and the costumes, 'para que todo se mueva bajo una sola tonalidad'.<sup>37</sup> Colour synaesthesia, the mingling of the colour with the non-visual senses, is central to this construct, as music and colour are held to be equally important in Gual's scenic theory: 'con la música se intentan reproducir los estados anímicos [...] siempre con el ambiente que nos proporciona el color'.<sup>38</sup> Peral Vega suggests:

Se trata de un intento de superación de Wagner, ajeno casi por completo a la cuestión plástica, en tanto el color es asumido como un instrumento capital para establecer las correspondencias entre lo físico y lo espiritual en el escenario. Una coloración 'morada' que todo la llena, como correlato a la condición soñadora de Él y Ella, a

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<sup>34</sup> Peral Vega, 'Dos visionarios en escena', p. 492 and p. 495. 'The move away from the referential is outlined by a chromatic duality which is taken to the extreme', 'the setting, seemingly realistic, ceases to be so through the chromatic black-white game applied to each of the objects in the scenery'.

<sup>35</sup> Peral Vega, 'Dos visionarios en escena', p. 492. 'Everything is dominated by a white tone [...] which increases its synaesthetic meaning as we become embroiled in the dramatic conflict'.

<sup>36</sup> Peral Vega, 'Dos visionarios en escena', p. 496. 'The spectator's gaze on the central surface'.

<sup>37</sup> Adrià Gual, *Teoria escénica*, trans. by Ignasi García (Madrid: Asociación de directores de escena de España and Institut del teatre de la diputació de Barcelona, 2001), p. 166 and p. 74. 'Will encompass the scene', 'the painted elements', 'the lights which are used', 'so everything moves within a single colour scheme'.

<sup>38</sup> Gual, *Teoria escénica*, p. 74. 'With the music you try to reproduce the states of mind [...] always within the environment which colour provides us with'.

través de la pintura, la iluminación, el vestuario y los elementos de construcción escénica.<sup>39</sup>

Peral Vega's analysis of *Nocturne* is significant in relation to Lorca's theatre because he indicates that Gual is looking to create a unified theatre through colour, that he extended Richard Wagner's theory of a 'Total Work of Art' to the plastic arts, and that the colouration of the play is connected to the inner workings of the protagonists. The intersensory nature of Lorca's colour-work and the blending of different media are also evoked in Gual's paralleling of colour and music. I discuss the sensory values of Lorca's theatre of poetry in Chapter Four, especially his exploration of the mutable rose in *Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje de las flores* (1935) and his portrayal of the implicit yellow quinces in *Mariana Pineda*. However, what is particularly noteworthy in relation to Lorca's theatre is that in Gual's work the dominance of colour is not mirrored in the dialogue but remains a purely visual force, in contrast with Lorca's interweaving of verbal and visual colour to create a poetic whole. Whilst Peral Vega's study begins to address the critical gap in Hispanic theatre colour studies, I will argue that an exploration of the dual verbal-visual level of colour in Lorca's work offers a more sustained and complex representation of colour and calls for an interdisciplinary approach which draws more widely on current colour scholarship.

José Manuel Pereiro Otero's 2009 study of Valle-Inclán's novels *Flor de santidad* (1904) [Flower of Holiness], *La lámpara maravillosa* (1916) [The Marvellous Lamp], *La medianoche* (1917) [Midnight], and *Tirano Banderas* (1926) draws our attention to the importance of colour in Valle-Inclán's writing as part of a wider Modernist project.<sup>40</sup> For

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<sup>39</sup> Peral Vega, 'Dos visionarios en escena', p. 492. 'It is an attempt to go beyond Wagner, who completely neglected the matter of the plastic arts, in the sense that colour becomes a key tool in establishing the correspondences between the physical and the spiritual on the stage. A 'purple' colouring which fills the whole stage – the painted set, the lighting, the costumes, and the elements of stage design – as a corollary of the dream state of Him and Her'.

<sup>40</sup> See José Manuel Pereiro Otero, *La escritura modernista de Valle-Inclán: Orgía de colores* (Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2009), Kindle eBook.

Pereiro Otero, Valle-Inclán's colour practice is centred on 'un exceso y una saturación sensoriales que dislocan los mecanismos y los parámetros de la retórica clásica' in which the page is crammed with an 'orgy' of colours, objects, textures, and sensations.<sup>41</sup> In *Flor de santidad*, he finds colour to be a slippery, mutating force which draws on colour synaesthesia and the realm of implicit colour in order to create a plethora of contradictory and multi-faceted images of colour. Indeed, Pereiro Otero argues that in this work Valle-Inclán 'proclam[a] la superioridad de la connotación sobre la denotación', crafting a world of colour in which mimesis is overturned in favour of a world of creative freedom.<sup>42</sup> In *La lámpara maravillosa* colour synaesthesia continues to be important as Valle-Inclán explores a world of hallucinogenic ecstasy in which colour sensation becomes a mode of expressing ultra-linguistic experiences. Here, transcendence takes us beyond the limits of the word, as 'la embriaguez cromática envuelve tanto al sujeto como al objeto' and colour 'produce y es consecuencia de la abolición de las diferencias, la desaparición de las fronteras'.<sup>43</sup> Colour becomes much more monochromatic in *La medianoche*, often appearing as a contrast of black and white. Pereiro Otero suggests that this starkness is reflective of a radical change in Valle-Inclán's aesthetic consciousness following his experiences on the front line in the First World War. However, in *Tirano Banderas*, colour resurges. As Pereiro Otero probes this fragmented and multi-faceted text he proposes that 'los colores ya han dejado definitivamente de ser un índice de descripción realista para independizarse'.<sup>44</sup> Throughout this work, Pereiro Otero explores the links between Modernist writing and colour and demonstrates the

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<sup>41</sup> Pereiro Otero, loc. 39. 'Sensory excess and saturation which disrupt the mechanism and parameters of classic rhetoric'.

<sup>42</sup> Pereiro Otero, loc. 5549. 'Proclaims the superiority of connotation over denotation'.

<sup>43</sup> Pereiro Otero, loc. 3392 and loc 3384. 'Chromatic drunkenness enshrouds the subject as much as the object', '[colour] produces, and is the consequence of, the abolition of differences, the disappearance of borders'. See also David Batchelor's reading of Aldous Huxley's essay collection *Heaven and Hell* (1956), in which he explores the links between colour and literary accounts of drug use, visions, and paradise. Batchelor suggests that, for Huxley, the 'intense, heightened, pure, unqualified' nature of gem colour 'offered a glimpse of the "Other World", a world beyond Nature and the Law, a world undimmed by language, concepts, meanings and uses', (*Chromophobia*, p. 75).

<sup>44</sup> Pereiro Otero, loc. 5459. 'Colours have now definitively ceased to be a realistic descriptive index and have become independent'.

importance of reading Valle-Inclán's work with regard to the labile, implicit, and cognitive values of colour. Although at times Pereiro Otero moves away from the chromatic elements of this discussion, this work provides an important starting point and highlights the need for a similar re-consideration of Valle-Inclán's theatre.

In Hispanic visual culture there has been a greater critical preoccupation with the use of colour in film, although much of this research focuses on late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century sources, for example the works of Pedro Almodóvar and Guillermo del Toro. Studies by Paul Julian Smith,<sup>45</sup> Vanessa Ceia,<sup>46</sup> and Deborah Shaw acknowledge the importance of colour in twenty-first-century Hispanic film, yet the focus is limited to the colour coding of space.<sup>47</sup> Sarah Wright's analysis of del Toro's *Laberinto del fauno* (2006) [Pan's Labyrinth] and Javier Fesser's *Camino* (2008) in her 2013 monograph *The Child in Spanish Cinema* also explores the use of colour to mark space, particularly the contrast between reality and fantasy. Furthermore, Wright considers the affective power of colour in these representations. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's essay 'A Child's View of Colour' (1914-15) and David Batchelor's *Chromophobia* (2000), which forms part of my own methodology for Chapter Two, Wright probes how colour in these films reflects the subjectivity of the child protagonists, and how their fantasy worlds comprise 'a fall into colour', offering an important example of how colour studies can nourish Hispanic research.<sup>48</sup> Peral Vega's and Wright's works highlight the possibilities of probing colour in Hispanic studies, particularly the

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<sup>45</sup> See Paul Julian Smith's reviews of Almodóvar's *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999) [All About my Mother] and *Hable con ella* (2002) [Talk to Her] in 'Silicone and Sentiment', *Sight and Sound*, 9.9 (1999) <<http://old.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/feature/183>> and 'Only Connect', *Sight and Sound*, 12.7 (2002) <<http://old.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/feature/74>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

<sup>46</sup> See Vanessa Ceia's 2016 article 'Un/Framing Identity: Space and Colour in Pedro Almodóvar's *Pepi, Luci, Bom y Otras Chicas del Montón*/*Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls Like Mom* (1980)', *Studies in Spanish and Latin American Cinemas*, 13.3 (2016), 247–63, where she discusses Almodóvar's use of colour and space to mark political spheres and social hierarchies.

<sup>47</sup> See Deborah Shaw's reading of the use of colour to differentiate between fantasy and reality and emotional states in Guillermo del Toro's, Alejandro Iñárritu's, and Alfonso Cuarón's cinema in *The Three Amigos: The Transnational Filmmaking of Guillermo del Toro, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and Alfonso Cuarón* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013).

<sup>48</sup> Sarah Wright, *The Child in Spanish Cinema* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 149.

importance of the imbrication of verbal and visual colour in Hispanic theatre, and the affective and subjective capacities of colour in film.

## CHAPTER METHODOLOGIES

Colour is an important tool in Lorca's work for conveying internal experiences and offering insight into his characters, and forms a key part of how he communicates and complicates the subjectivities of his protagonists as part of his visceral theatre of poetry and his preoccupation with the suffering of daily life. *Bernarda Alba* is the sole focus of Chapter Two as this play comprises Lorca's most explicit chromatic engagement with two key aspects of his theatre of poetry: his exploration of the protagonist's inner realities and the presentation of abstract ideas and emotions or important motifs in visual form. Guided by Batchelor's concept of 'chromophobia', which he defines as a 'loathing of colour' and a 'fear of corruption through colour', I will argue that the extreme visual and verbal representations of whiteness and Bernarda's attempted occlusion of colour in the play are indicative of this idea of chromophobia.<sup>49</sup> The association of colour with corruption is an historic one, which can be traced back to the *disegno* versus *colore* debate, the Aristotelian opposition between line and colour where colour is considered feminine, foreign, 'primitive', and ornamental. Batchelor suggests that colour is either viewed as 'alien' and 'dangerous' or 'perceived merely as a secondary quality of experience, and thus unworthy of serious consideration'.<sup>50</sup> In his analysis of the work of French critic and colour theorist Charles Blanc, who published *The Grammar of Painting* in 1867, Batchelor notes that Blanc saw colour as constituting 'the

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<sup>49</sup> Batchelor, *Chromophobia*, p. 22. Drawing on his memories of the totally white interior of an art collector's house, Batchelor asks what it means to exclude other colours so forcefully and why we do so: 'If colour is unimportant, I began to wonder, why is it so important to exclude it so forcefully? If colour doesn't matter, why does its abolition matter so much?' Ironically, this extreme rejection of hued colour actually draws our attention to it in its absence: 'This shutting-off began to speak more and more about what it excluded than what it contained', (*Chromophobia*, p. 21).

<sup>50</sup> Batchelor, *Chromophobia*, p. 23.

mythic savage state' which mankind has lifted itself from; colour constitutes an Eve-like fall from grace. For Blanc, 'colour could not be ignored and dismissed [...] It had to be contained and subordinated'.<sup>51</sup> Batchelor suggests that the prejudice against and loathing of colour 'masks a fear': 'a fear of contamination and corruption by something that is unknown or unknowable'.<sup>52</sup> I will argue that Bernarda's bodily, exaggerated reactions to intrusions of colour – such as Adela's red-and-green fan – speak of a complex psychological relationship with colour which exceeds purely symbolic readings and merits a fuller investigation as an important example of Lorca's theatre of poetry.

The scarcity of colour in *Bernarda Alba* invests it with a disruptive effect when it does appear, stimulating the audience. Roland Barthes's discussions of *jouissance*, 'bliss', an unsettling and explosive state of affective impact centred on the sensual body and the stimulated mind, nourishes my exploration of the explosive capacity of colour in *Bernarda Alba*, opening up perspectives on colour affect. In his 1982 essay on artist Cy Twombly, Barthes considers the 'blissful' impact of colour:

It suffices that color appear, that it be there, that it be inscribed like a pinprick in the corner of the eye [...] It suffices that color lacerate something: that it pass in front of the eye, like an apparition – or a disappearance, for color is like a closing eyelid, a tiny fainting spell.<sup>53</sup>

Bliss is disquieting and challenges at a subjective level. In *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973) Barthes suggests that bliss 'unsettles [the reader's] historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language'.<sup>54</sup> Barthes's reading of bliss in both a visual and verbal context has important

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<sup>51</sup> Batchelor, *Chromophobia*, p. 23.

<sup>52</sup> Batchelor, *Chromophobia*, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup> Roland Barthes, 'Cy Twombly: Works on Paper', p. 166.

<sup>54</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p. 14.



ramifications for my reading of *Bernarda Alba*: that colour can be particularly impactful in its scarcity, and that colour is continually in motion, appearing fleetingly. Bliss is thus central to Lorca's aim of unsettling and galvanising his audience in his theatre of poetry and integral to his rejection of a mimetic, passive spectating experience. Throughout my thesis, I take the idea of *jouissance* and explore it through chromatic values. The idea of bliss offers insight into Bernarda's character, particularly in her extreme reactions to colour which reveal how colour is a threat to her sense of self, and allows me to consider how the attempted repression of colour creates moments of chromatic eruption which startle both the protagonist and the audience.

Colour also offers psychological insights as a visual device which represents inner states, bringing abstract emotions to the stage in physical form as part of Lorca's theatre of poetry. Krzysztof Kieślowski's use of blue in *Three Colours: Blue* (1993) has been explored by Emma Wilson as the visual expression of the protagonist Julie's psychological trauma. In her 1998 article Wilson considers blueness in Kieślowski's film as the visualisation of Julie's mental state, which suggests an approach for reading the whiteness of the setting and dialogue in *Bernarda Alba* as representative of Bernarda's inner world. In *Blue*, the protagonist Julie's trauma is revealed to us through blue light and classical orchestra and piano music. Wilson draws our attention particularly to the three swimming pool scenes as semiotic spaces which 'allow the viewer to question the imbrication of colour, trauma and denial'.<sup>55</sup> Although Kieślowski's and Lorca's contexts and effects are very different, Wilson's analysis nourishes my exploration of the connection between visual colour in *Bernarda Alba* and

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<sup>55</sup> Wilson, 'Three Colours: Blue: Kieślowski, Colour and the Postmodern Subject', p. 355. See also Wilson's reviews of the affective capacity of blue in Abdellatif Kechiche's *The Life of Adele*, adapted from Julie Maroh's graphic novel *Blue is the Warmest Colour*: 'La Vie d'Adèle, Chapitres 1 and 2: Blue on Blue, Heartache on Heartache', in *Paris Update*, 13 Oct 2013 <<https://www.parisupdate.com/la-vie-d-adele-chapitres-1-et-2/>> [accessed 11 September 2019] and 'Kind of Blue: La Vie d'Adèle', in *University of Cambridge Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities blog*, 20 November 2013 <<http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/blog/post/going-to-the-pictures-with...emma-wilson-blue-is-the-warmest-colour>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

Bernarda's mental state. The idea of colour as a tool for portraying inner states in visual, ultra-linguistic terms is important for how colour and whiteness work in *Bernarda Alba* and also for our understanding of the highly visual nature of Lorca's colour-writing and his aim of bringing poetry from page to stage through a striking theatre of raw emotion.

White is not just a representation of psychological values in *Bernarda Alba*; it is also an important material force and takes on acoustic values, forming part of Lorca's appeal to the audience's senses and of his move towards a more interactive and demanding theatrical practice in his theatre of poetry. Eric Robertson's work on white in modern French poetry and abstract art has been influential on my thinking of the parallels between acoustic and visual silence in *Bernarda Alba*. Robertson's analysis of Mallarmé's *A Roll of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance* (1897) finds a correlation between whiteness and silence which I will use to explore the soundscape of *Bernarda Alba*. The hegemony of whiteness in the play dominates the auditory as well as visual sphere. Robertson sees Mallarmé's poem as conflating visual and auditory values in Mallarmé's references to music in the preface and also in 'the intersensory analogy that Mallarmé establishes between colour and auditory effects – in this case white and crystalline silence'.<sup>56</sup> The auditory capacity of whiteness is also a key part of Robertson's exploration of the paintings of Simon Hantaï, whose method of folding and tying his canvases resists the paint in certain places and produces leaf-like white patterns on a bold, coloured background. Significantly, Hantaï sees these patches of unpainted canvas as the central element of his work, gaps which he refers to as 'retinal silences'.<sup>57</sup> The idea of 'retinal silences' blends the visual and auditory qualities of whiteness as the 'silencing' of colour or the 'silence' of the white space of the music score, a comparison made by artist and synaesthete Wassily Kandinsky in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), or interruptions of the internal or external voice as we read a text. The potential implications of Robertson's

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<sup>56</sup> Robertson, p. 323.

<sup>57</sup> Cited in Robertson, p. 328.

readings of Mallarmé and Hantaï for my evaluation of *Bernarda Alba* lie in the correlation between Bernarda's occlusion of colour and her demands for silence. I will explore silence in the play as an auditory extension of the visual values of whiteness as part of Lorca's exploration of a core poetic motif which influences all of the aspects of the staging.

In *Writing Degree Zero* (1953) Barthes suggests an interrelation between white, silence, and writing which is valuable for my reading of the sparsity of language and the links between the monochrome set and the dialogue in *Bernarda Alba*. Barthes views Albert Camus's *The Outsider* (1942) as offering an alternative way of 'disengaging literary language' by 'creating a *white* writing, freed from all bondage to a pre-ordained state of language'.<sup>58</sup> This 'écriture blanche' represents a 'new neutral writing' and a 'silence of form' which 'deliberately forgoes any elegance or ornament'.<sup>59</sup> Barthes suggests that 'white writing' 'achieves a style of absence which is almost an ideal absence of style; writing is then reduced to a sort of negative mood in which the social or mythical characters of a language are abolished in favour of a neutral and inert state of form'.<sup>60</sup> This sparse, stripped, 'white' writing supports my reading of the silence and pared-down dialogue in *Bernarda Alba* as a verbal reflection of the minimalist set, and captures the interplay between the visual and the verbal that characterises Lorca's theatre of poetry.

An equally important tool when reading for the imbrication of visual 'whiteness' in Lorca's written text is French writer Annie Ernaux's concept of 'écriture plate' or 'flat writing'. I will use the concept of 'flat writing' to reflect on the 'flatness' of speech in *Bernarda Alba*. Ernaux's writing is seen by critic Warren Motte as 'an example of minimalist writing in which emotions, poetics, and subjectivity are intentionally and vehemently

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<sup>58</sup> Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (London: Cape, 1967), pp. 81–82. My emphasis.

<sup>59</sup> Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, pp. 82–84.

<sup>60</sup> Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, p. 77.

excluded in favor of a more neutral and factual style'.<sup>61</sup> In her 1983 novel *A Man's Place*, in which she narrates the life of her late father, Ernaux writes:

I have no right to adopt an artistic approach, or attempt to produce something 'moving' or 'gripping' [...] No lyrical reminiscences, no triumphant displays of irony. This neutral way of writing came to me naturally. It was the same style I used when I wrote home telling my parents the latest news.<sup>62</sup>

Ernaux aims for an objective, 'neutral' writing style which Jennifer Anderson Bliss claims 'actively attempts to reject any sort of poetic, emotional, or otherwise subjectively construed interventions'.<sup>63</sup> However, Anderson Bliss questions the success of Ernaux's attempts at distance and objectivity, revealing 'the existence and influence of *'affects in exprimés'* ('unspoken affect') at work in the text' in her analysis.<sup>64</sup> Ernaux's later discussion of her writing practice acknowledges a dialogue of sharpness and flatness in her work, offering a more complex view of the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity. As well as intentionally 'flat', Ernaux's writing can also be considered as 'sharp'. The writer and critic Frédéric-Yves Jeannet has praised Ernaux's 'phrases sans métaphores, sans *effets*, leurs silex affûtés qui tranchent dans le vif, écorchent'.<sup>65</sup> Ernaux herself describes her 'imaginaire des mots' as centred on 'la pierre et le couteau', suggesting a duality of flatness and sharpness in her writing.<sup>66</sup> She adds that 'ces lettres auxquelles je fais allusion étaient toujours concises, à

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<sup>61</sup> Cited in Jennifer Anderson Bliss, 'Writing as Flat as a Photograph: Subjectivity in Annie Ernaux's *La Place*', *Lit: Literature, Interpretation and Theory*, 24.2 (2013), 164–83 (p. 164).

<sup>62</sup> Annie Ernaux, *A Man's Place*, trans. by Tanya Leslie (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1992), p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> Anderson Bliss, p. 164.

<sup>64</sup> Anderson Bliss, p. 164. Anderson Bliss also argues that Ernaux's writing is 'flat' in the sense that it is photographic as 'the text itself takes on qualities of a photograph: flat, framed, constructed and referring to a real existence while creating meaning only in relation to the individual', (p. 173). The idea of photographic writing reminds us of the importance of framing techniques in Lorca's theatre – such as the *estampa* in *Mariana Pineda* and the *aleluya* in *Don Perlimplín* – and of the 'photographic documentary' aesthetic of *Bernarda Alba*. I explore the chromatic implications of *Bernarda Alba* as a 'photographic documentary' in Chapter Two.

<sup>65</sup> Annie Ernaux and Frédéric-Yves Jeannet, *L'écriture comme un couteau: Entretien avec Frédéric-Yves Jeannet* (Paris: Stock, 2003), Kindle ebook, loc. 90. 'Sentences without metaphors, without *effets*, their sharpened flints which cut into the flesh, flay'. Original emphasis.

<sup>66</sup> Ernaux and Jeannet, *L'écriture comme un couteau*, loc. 857. 'Imaginary of words', 'the stone and the knife'.

la limite du dépouillement, sans effets de style, sans humour’, emphasising her focus on concise and unembellished narrative which creates affect through its very starkness.<sup>67</sup> I will use the idea of ‘sharp’ writing or ‘writing like a knife’ to reflect on the dynamic between flatness and sharpness in *Bernarda Alba*. The ways Lorca captures the sharpness of Bernarda’s speech and gestures undermine the minimalism of ‘white writing’ captures her conflicted and complex mental state and offers ways of exploring how Lorca reflects the core poetic theme of whiteness within modes of speech.

My analysis of colour and corporeality in Chapter Three builds on my discussion in the preceding chapter of material whiteness and of colour as a reflection of character subjectivities and Lorca’s engagement of key themes and emotions in physical form. I will argue that Lorca’s exploration of bodily colour comprises a different way of expressing the visceral suffering of his protagonists and consider how he makes poetry flesh in his characters, creating a ‘human’ theatre with protagonists of ‘bone-and-blood’. I begin by probing how material whiteness is a key aspect of how Lorca represents corporeal colour as well as the material expression of mental states in *Bernarda Alba*. Many of Lorca’s female characters are presented as literally ‘white’, blending symbolic values with their material bodies. Richard Dyer’s 1997 study of the how ‘white’ people represent themselves in Western visual culture differentiates between literal and social ideas of bodily colour and provides ways of examining and indeed troubling representations of the white female body in Lorca’s theatre, particularly in my readings of the Bride in *Bodas de sangre*, the Butterfly in *El maleficio de la mariposa* (1920), Mariana in *Mariana Pineda*, and Belisa in *Don Perlimplín*. For Dyer, bodily whiteness is a social construct: ‘White people are neither literally nor symbolically white. We are not the colour of snow or bleached linen, nor are we

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<sup>67</sup> Ernaux and Jeannet, *L’écriture comme un couteau*, loc. 332. ‘These letters to which I allude were always concise, at the limit of asceticism, without stylistic effects, without humor’.

uniquely virtuous and pure'.<sup>68</sup> Dyer comments on the 'slippage' between symbolic, racial, and material whiteness and explores how the colour term is appropriated to define an ascriptive racial category, which in turn becomes conflated with symbolic values of beauty and morality.<sup>69</sup> As Dyer argues, these representations are problematic. As we shall see, Lorca's exploration of female bodily whiteness gives way to a more equivocal portrayal which turns away from socially inscribed bodily surfaces to the truth that lies within.

Lorca's portrayal of the punctured male body and the labile, explosive capacity of implicit redness is an important aspect of his creation of an unsettling, shocking theatre of poetry. The idea of the punctum, explored by Barthes in *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980), feeds into my reading of colour and the wounded male body in Lorca's theatre as both an affective act of piercing and as a literal puncturing of the male body. Whilst *jouissance* is an erotic, explosive force, the punctum is more of a sharp shock, our emotive reaction to a small detail. Here, colour becomes more subtle, yet the mental images these violent depictions create are all centred on the implicit redness of blood. In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes distinguishes between two aspects of photography: 'studium' and 'the punctum'. 'Studium' is a neutral reaction to a photograph, a broad cultural or historical interest or 'a kind of general, enthusiastic commitment [...] without special acuity'.<sup>70</sup> In contrast, 'the punctum' is an aspect of a photograph 'which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me [...] it is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)'.<sup>71</sup> The punctum is a sudden spark of affect which disturbs the studium; it is Nick Ut's 'The Terror of War' (1972) where children run through napalm; it is the eye being

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<sup>68</sup> Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 42.

<sup>69</sup> Dyer, p. 64.

<sup>70</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 26. For an examination of the impact of Barthes's changing perspectives regarding photography and visual representation on cultural and media studies, see Jean-Michel Rabaté, (ed.), *Writing the Image after Roland Barthes* (Philadelphia, PN: Philadelphia University Press, 1997).

<sup>71</sup> Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 26.

sliced open in *An Andalusian Dog* (1929).<sup>72</sup> Barthes's theory of the punctum can be used to capture the specific affective quality of the piercing of the male body and spilling of corporeal colour in Lorca's theatre, particularly the way in which Lorca uses these perforations to 'prick' the audience's consciousness in his innovative theatre of poetry. Whilst the stabbing of the male characters is 'literal', Lorca's portrayals of female bodily pain are metaphorical and consist of an expression of emotional suffering in somatic terms through a discourse of bodily colour focused on sores, bruising, burns, and blood. My discussion of this emotional wounding is inspired by Carol Mavor's reading of the punctum in her 2012 monograph in terms of its affective 'bruising' impact. Although Barthes is speaking in psychological and aesthetic terms – for him the punctum is a mental rather than bodily impact – Mavor blurs the boundaries between the affective pricking of the mind and the piercing of the body, considering bruising, and its blacks and blues, as an injury that is 'neither outside or inside'.<sup>73</sup> This is the residual impact of the punctum; the sharp shock gives way to a lingering pain which stands in contrast to the explosive, disruptive values of colour bliss. After the initial sharpness 'a tenderness remains, though we may have forgotten how the bruise got there' and we are left with 'that Barthesian black-and-blue feeling of that which has been'.<sup>74</sup> Mavor's reading of the residual effects of the punctum created by the

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<sup>72</sup> Gwynne Edwards and Virginia Higginbotham have commented on the influence of this film on *Así que pasen cinco años*. See Edwards, 'Lorca and Buñuel: *Así que pasen cinco años* and *Un chien andalou*', *García Lorca Review*, 9.2 (1981), 128–41, and Virginia Higginbotham, '*Así que pasen cinco años*: Una versión literaria de *Un chien andalou*', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, 433–34 (1986), 343–50. Delgado and Paul Julian Smith also suggest that *An Andalusian Dog* heavily influenced Lorca's film script *Viaje a la luna*. See Paul Julian Smith, 'Reading Intermediality: Lorca's *Viaje a la luna* (Journey to the Moon, 1929) and *Un chien andalou* (Buñuel/Dalí, 1929)', *Modern Languages Open* (2014), 1–9, and Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, pp. 128–29. The film's title supposedly refers to Lorca himself, which offended Lorca. According to Buñuel in his 1984 autobiography: 'Shortly before *Un Chien andalou* Lorca and I had a falling-out; later, thin-skinned Andalusian that he was, he thought (or pretended to think) that the film was actually a personal attack on him. "Buñuel's made a little film, just like that!" he used to say, snapping his fingers. "It's called *An Andalusian Dog*, and I'm the dog!"' Luis Buñuel, *My Last Breath*, trans. by Abigail Israel (London: Vintage Digital, 2011), p. 157.

<sup>73</sup> Carol Mavor, *Black and Blue: The Bruising Passion of 'Camera Lucida', 'La Jetée', 'Sans Soleil', and 'Hiroshima Mon Amour'* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), p. 16. Mavor is quoting Sarah Turner here.

<sup>74</sup> Mavor, p.15 and p. 81.

filmic image enhances my exploration of the affective power of the female characters' somatic expression of painful inner realities in Lorca's theatre of poetry.

The apparent 'emotional bruising' (female) and 'puncturing (male) dialectic becomes troubled when we begin to consider the affective power of these portrayals and their mutual communication of pain through bodily colour. Drawing on queer theory, I will explore how Lorca uses both male and female wounded bodies to highlight the effects of rigid gender roles and to advocate a queering of the body through his use of anti-mimetic bodily colour and materials. A 'queer' approach to Lorca's text captures this ambiguity and fluidity, an approach which Stuart Davis in his analysis of the possibility of 'queering' Hispanic studies suggests 'looks beyond the explanatory and celebrates indeterminacy [...] and finds its strengths in its ambiguity, allowing and encouraging multiple meanings to be generated from the words that stand on the page'.<sup>75</sup> Laura Doan and Jane Garrity suggest that the parallels between queer theory and Modernism are significant as they both 'resist fixity, cross boundaries, and regard with fascination the transgressive, marginal, and liminal'.<sup>76</sup> Jonathan Mayhew's re-evaluation of the possibilities of using queer theory to read Lorca, the understanding of sexual identity as fluid and changeable rather than as subscribing to fixed categories and gender binaries, is a timely challenge to the sustained critical emphasis on Lorca's own homosexuality in relation to portrayals of gender and sexuality in his work. Drawing on the body of thought influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Mayhew argues for a reading of sexuality in Lorca's work as 'an unstable textual construct rather than a biographical essence', highlighting the difference between a 'gay' approach and a 'queer' approach to Lorca. Mayhew suggests that the latter

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<sup>75</sup> Stuart Davis, 'Que(e)rying Spain: On the Limits and Possibilities of Queer Theory in Hispanism', in *Reading Iberia: Theory / History / Identity*, ed. by Helena Buffery, Stuart Davis, and Kirsty Hooper (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 63–79, (p. 75).

<sup>76</sup> Laura Doan and Jane Garrity, 'Modernism Queered', in *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*, ed. by David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), pp. 542–50, (p. 542).



‘invok[es] more fluid textualities and identities’.<sup>77</sup> As I discussed in my Introduction, a ‘gay’ reading of Lorca’s work risks placing too much emphasis on his personal sexuality and presumed understandings of his state of mind. Mayhew suggests that it is precisely the ambiguity and the lack of ‘a single, unified approach towards sexuality’ in Lorca’s work which makes queer theory such an appropriate tool for evaluating Lorca’s treatment of gender and sexuality.<sup>78</sup> This approach ties in with larger issues of Lorca’s concern with representing the suffering of individuals as a result of societal restriction, the ambivalence and experimentation of his theatre of poetry, and the ways these are figured through colour.

In Chapter Four I take forward these ideas of the ‘blissful’, ‘puncturing’, and ‘bruising’ affective impact of colour, Lorca’s communication of the emotional suffering of his protagonists, and his reflection of core poetic themes in the material staging, in my exploration of a different way in which Lorca makes poetry flesh. As well as the bodily aspects of Lorca’s colour-work, he brings poetry from page to stage through object colour. Throughout his theatre Lorca uses the object colour of the material staging to reflect a core poetic idea which he integrates in the costumes, lighting, sets, and props. This central idea takes the form of the mutable rose in *Doña Rosita*, the *estampa* in *Mariana Pineda*, the *aleluya* in *Don Perlimplín*, and the *farsa violenta* in *La zapatera*, which I focus on in this chapter, and the photographic documentary in *Bernarda Alba* which I explore in Chapter Two. As well as Lorca’s own theories surrounding the creation of a material poetry on stage, my discussion of the sensory qualities of implicit colour is enriched by Laura Marks’s work on the haptic and the olfactory, particularly my analysis of the yellow quinces in *Mariana Pineda*. I will use Marks’s concept of ‘haptic visuality’, ‘the way vision itself can be tactile’

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<sup>77</sup> Jonathan Mayhew, ‘Sexual Epistemologies: The Whitman Ode’ in *Lorca’s Legacy: Essays in Interpretation* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2018), pp. 139–66 (p. 140). See Michel Foucault *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 1990); and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>78</sup> Mayhew, p. 142.

in audiovisual media and her ideas surrounding the reciprocity of the haptic and the visual in order to probe the tactile values of colour in Lorca's theatre.<sup>79</sup> Whilst Marks's challenge is to show how audiovisual media evokes haptic experiences, her studies help us to consider the ways in which Lorca communicates sensory experiences to his audience through a more immediate but still non-interactive medium; we may be in the room with the action but Lorca does not intend us to traverse the stage and personally engage with these sensations. Marks describes 'haptic visuality' as the appeal of certain filmic images to the sense of touch, creating an intersensory experience: 'haptic images [...] invite the viewer to respond to the image in an intimate, embodied way, and thus facilitate the experience of other sensory impressions as well'.<sup>80</sup> Through her probing of 'haptic visuality', Marks aims 'to restore a flow between the haptic and the optical that our culture is currently lacking' and 'go back to an understanding of vision as embodied and material'.<sup>81</sup> However, Lorca's representation of sensory experiences in his staging is not limited to the tactile. For example, through his characters' engagement with the yellow quinces, Lorca also appeals to the olfactory and gustatory dimensions of these objects. I extend Marks's ideas to consider the role of an *embodied* visuality in through Lorca's engagement with object colour in his theatre of poetry.

Lorca's appeal to the senses through material colour is also supported by the dialogue. Indeed, sometimes these portrayals are not reflected on the stage in physical form. I consider the sensory impact of these purely verbal images in my discussion of the language of flowers in *Doña Rosita*. When these sensory experiences are woven through both the dialogue and the staging an element of imagination on the audience's part is still required. Drawing on Laura Marks's work on the olfactory in her 2008 article on multi-sensory culture, I develop

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<sup>79</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. xi. See also Jennifer Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009) and Abbie Garrington's discussion of the haptic values of British Modernist literature in 'Touching Texts: The Haptic Sense in Modernist Literature', *Literature Compass*, 7.9 (2010), 810–23.

<sup>80</sup> Laura Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 13.

<sup>81</sup> Marks, *Touch*, p. xiii.

her concept of the ‘olfactory imaginary;’ to consider how Lorca create a ‘sensory imaginary’ in his theatre which works in tandem with an embodied visuality. In her study, Marks focuses on the private and often incommunicable nature of the olfactory and its imbrication with the imagination and with the unconscious. Marks argues that smell is the ‘least translatable and most personal’ sense which is ‘less easily semantically coded’ and carries the ‘freight of personal affect’.<sup>82</sup> She draws our attention to the dual culturally-coded and asocial nature of the senses, suggesting that there are aspects of the olfactory which appeal to the imaginary and to ‘intense personal associations’ and thus problematize communication.<sup>83</sup> Smell, Marks argues, lies on the border between private and the public experiences. It is both a ‘private realm of the ‘olfactory imaginary’ and a social sense, the scents of particular foods evoking certain memories and giving us ‘the quality of socialising with a community even if others are absent’.<sup>84</sup> Arguably all of our senses hinge on this interface between the personal and the communicable due to their subjective nature and their relatability to other people’s experiences. Inspired by Marks’s ideas surrounding the olfactory, I will explore how Lorca inspires the audience’s ‘sensory imaginary’ by appealing to their own sense experiences and memories through the characters’ actions on stage.

Lorca’s appeal to the imagination and to the audience’s own experiences in his embodied theatre of poetry can be extended to the sensations and images he seeks to create through his use of verbal colour more generally. My exploration of these rich, mental colour images is stimulated by Elaine Scarry’s 1999 study of imaginative re-creation in English

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<sup>82</sup> Laura Marks, ‘Thinking Multisensory Culture’, *Paragraph*, 31.2 (2011), 123–37 (p. 125). In his 2004 paper on ‘Intersensoriality’, English literature scholar Steven Connor also probed the way in which our senses intermingle. He argued that any sensory experience engages multiple senses at the same time, contesting the long-standing Western hierarchization of the senses as ‘we rarely if ever apprehend the world through one sense alone’. Rather, our senses ‘communicate with each other, in cooperations and conjugations which are irregular and emergent’, creating an intersensory ‘complexion’ which ‘knits itself together anew with each configuration’, rather than a ‘static consortium of the senses’, ‘Intersensoriality’, unpublished paper delivered at ‘The Senses’ conference (Thames Valley University, 6 February 2004) <<http://stevenconnor.com/intersensoriality.html>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

<sup>83</sup> Marks, ‘Thinking Multisensory Culture’, p. 126.

<sup>84</sup> Marks, ‘Thinking Multisensory Culture’, p. 135.

poetry and fiction. Scarry argues that the poem or novel is ‘a set of instructions for mental composition – in something of the same way that a musical score provides a set of directions for how to reconstruct the music the composer heard long ago in his or her head’.<sup>85</sup> For Scarry, colour is subject to a ‘ratio of extension to intensity’; we cannot imagine a whole landscape of concentrated colour at once.<sup>86</sup> For example, she suggests that the re-imagining of the colour of the ‘blue-bells that clouded those turf steps in July with a lilac mist’ in Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) starts out as a focal point of intense colour, a ‘tight spot’ or ‘bud’ of ‘saturated blue’, which is then washed across the entire mental retina to create a ‘lilac mist’: ‘we mentally spread the color, magnify its area, thin out its hue’.<sup>87</sup> Chromatic re-creation is a process of re-visualising colour according to the writer’s instructions, and also a process of ‘colouring-in’. I will consider the mental act of colouring-in as a sixth formal practice of what Scarry calls ‘dreaming-by-the-book’, extending her focus on the re-picturing of the colours of flowers and landscapes to a broader evaluation of the theatrical dialogue as a set of mental colour instructions in Lorca’s plays. I use Scarry’s ideas to consider the impact of Lorca’s verbal colour when it is not reflected in the material staging, building on my examination of the effect of the off-stage stabbing of the male body in Chapter Three in my analysis of the innovative object colour metaphors in *Mariana Pineda*. Throughout this chapter I question the power of purely verbal colour images in Lorca’s theatre of poetry as part of his aim of bringing poetry to life on the theatrical stage.

These ideas surrounding the subjective, affective, and intersensory nature of colour allow us to consider Lorca’s engagement with colour beyond its symbolic values, enabling a fuller consideration of his colour-work as part of his creation of an emotive, galvanising

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<sup>85</sup> Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book*, p. 244. In ‘Colorsteps’, Susan Harrow builds on Scarry’s idea of imaginative re-creation and considers ‘acts of chromatic imagining’ in modern and contemporary French poetry, emphasising the potential for extending Scarry’s concept specifically to colour, (p. 36).

<sup>86</sup> Scarry, p. 53.

<sup>87</sup> Scarry, p. 185.

theatre of poetry which embodies key themes and images in the material staging. In the following chapters I explore how these readings of colour shed light on Lorca's engagement with psychological, bodily, and material colour respectively, and what they tell us about his ideas about theatre as a whole.

## Chapter Two: Colour and the Psyche

The primary focus of this chapter is how Lorca uses material colour in *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) to reflect abstract emotions and key themes in visual form and to explore the inner realities and mental states of his characters in his theatre of poetry. As I argued in my Introduction, *Bernarda Alba* is not a move away from Lorca's theatre of poetry but rather comprises an important exploration of the materialization of poetry on stage through colour. As Sumner M. Greenfield observes, the supposed realism of the play is 'interwoven with images, symbols, and stylizations which form the poetic restatement of the dramatic action'.<sup>1</sup> Colour is at the very heart of Lorca's conception of *Bernarda Alba* and is the sole focus of this first analytical chapter as it is the most explicit and sustained example of the importance of material colour in Lorca's theatre of poetry. The 'poetic core' of the play which guides all of the elements of the staging and is interlaced through the dialogue is inspired by a photographic documentary, as Lorca indicates in the character list. Although this aesthetic suggests a black-and-white colour scheme which is reflected throughout the play in the contrast of the women's black costumes and the bold white set, it is whiteness which comprises the most dominant visual image. Whilst Lorca had explored the motif of whiteness to some extent in previous plays including *El maleficio de la mariposa* (1920), *Mariana Pineda* (1925), *El amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (1925), and *Bodas de sangre* (1932), as I explore in my discussion of corporeal colour in Chapter Three, in *Bernarda Alba* white becomes not only the central motif of the play, but a powerful psychological and material force. The walls are described in the stage directions at the beginning of each Act as '*blanquísima[s]*' (p. 308); '*blanca[s]*', (p. 342); and '*blancas*

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<sup>1</sup> Sumner M. Greenfield, 'Poetry and Stagecraft in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*', *Hispania*, 38.4 (1955), 456–61 (p. 456).

*ligeramente azuladas*' (p. 378) respectively.<sup>2</sup> Edwards suggests that through the white setting Lorca 'encapsulat[es] in a single image all that is in the play [...] suggest[ing] as well something that exists beyond it'.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, there are occasional intrusions of hued colour in the play in both the dialogue and the material staging – such as Adela's red-and-green fan and her green dress, and the blue tint of the white walls in Act Three – which create a dialectic of whiteness and hued colour that captures the opposing forces of Bernarda and her family in physical form. Much of the existing critical discussion of colour in *Bernarda Alba* focuses solely on the symbolic recuperations of whiteness rather than its psychological potency. In his reading of the play Henryk Ziomek explores whiteness as indicative of sterility, of the numbing or suppression of emotions, and of purity.<sup>4</sup> Whilst Edwards's analysis is more fruitful as it acknowledges the importance of material colour and the extension of the core poetic themes to other elements of the staging, he does suggest that the white sets have a 'stark, simplified, symbolic character' which reflects the monotony of the women's lives rather than seeing this whiteness as having any active, affective purpose.<sup>5</sup> Greenfield recognises the role of whiteness in Lorca's theatre of poetry in *Bernarda Alba*, yet he too fails to invest the material colour dynamic with any agency. Again, the walls are a passive surface, 'little more than a visual prop' for the scenic and poetic expression of the play and 'a symbol of the protagonist'.<sup>6</sup> In my reading of *Bernarda Alba* I acknowledge the importance of Bernarda's imbrication of whiteness and honour, and of colour and dishonour, but I will argue that Lorca uses this ascetic whiteness to reflect Bernarda's draconian views on honour and social appearances and her disturbed and unstable state of mind. In turn, it is the affective

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<sup>2</sup> The walls begin as 'extremely white', using the superlative, then become 'white', with the unmodified adjective, then finally they are 'a lightly blued white', suggestive of both the lessening of the intensity of whiteness and the gradual intrusion of processes of colour, as shown through the use of 'blue' as a verbal adjective.

<sup>3</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> See Henryk Ziomek, 'El simbolismo del blanco en *La casa de Bernarda Alba* y en *La dama del alba*', *Symposium*, 24.1 (1970), 81–85 (pp. 82–83).

<sup>5</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 266.

<sup>6</sup> Greenfield, 'Poetry and Stagecraft', p. 457.

power and vulnerable nature of whiteness which exacerbates Bernarda's paranoia, causing her to react to hued colour in ways which are indicative of the 'fear and loathing' of colour or 'chromophobia' which David Batchelor explores in his study of the long history of the subordination of colour.<sup>7</sup> This extreme, abnormal state of whiteness incites anxiety in other characters, Adela for example, due to its connotations of imprisonment and death. In contrast, Adela's desperation for personal and sexual freedom is sparked by and reflected in her desire for colour, a chromatic desire which has blissful qualities due to its erotic, explosive values and the stimulating impact that these rare intrusions of visual colour have on the audience. Rather than purely symbolic phenomena or passive surfaces, both whiteness and hued colour are a powerful psychological force which has a marked effect on the characters and on the audience in Lorca's theatre of poetry.

Symbolic readings have shown us how Bernarda's privileging of white in *Bernarda Alba* is based on its associations of purity and innocence. In his study of 'white' people's representation of themselves in Western visual culture, Dyer comments on the conflation of whiteness with 'purity, spirituality, transcendence, cleanliness, virtue, simplicity, chastity'.<sup>8</sup> I trouble this imbrication of symbolic and material portrayals of whiteness in my discussion of female bodily whiteness in Chapter Three. For Bernarda, white thus becomes the moral and aesthetic corollary of her obsession with the Spanish concept of honour and ideas of public

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<sup>7</sup> Batchelor, *Chromophobia*, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Dyer, p. 72. Dyer tells us that white as 'the colour of virtue' was 'by no means securely in place before the Renaissance, but since then it has become so commonplace as to be presented as inevitable, universal and natural', (pp. 72–73).



reputation, as explored so relentlessly in the Spanish Golden Age honour play.<sup>9</sup> Edwards notes that whilst honour is an important theme in Lorca's other plays, especially *La zapatera prodigiosa* (1926), *Bodas de sangre*, and *Yerma* (1934), *Bernarda Alba* 'has honour in its sense of name, reputation and public image at the very centre of its tragic conflict'.<sup>10</sup> As part of his theatre of poetry, Lorca continually reflects the key themes of the play in the material staging, projecting Bernarda's fixation on honour and on the creation of a façade of social appearances onto the material whiteness of the house. In Act Three Bernarda tells Angustias that 'yo no me meto en los corazones, pero quiero buena *fachada* y armonía familiar' (p. 384), which highlights her obsession with outward appearances and the central role of the house within this construct.<sup>11</sup> In the final scene of the play Bernarda's use of the imperfect subjunctive mood further demonstrates how the external façade of whiteness is valued above deeper reality: 'llevadla a su cuarto y vestirla *como si fuera* doncella' (Bernarda regarding Adela, p. 403).<sup>12</sup> The emphasis on the outward appearance of Bernarda's household rather than the domestic reality within dovetails with the Spanish honour code. As Greenfield emphasises, 'if the dishonorable act does not become known abroad, it ceases to be dishonor'.<sup>13</sup> The motif of whitewashing, which is both literal and figurative, enhances the ideas of concealment and outward appearances introduced by 'fachada'. The white façade belies the events inside the house; as Greenfield argues it is a 'spotless coating of whitewash

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<sup>9</sup> Francisco Aguilar Piñal defines the Spanish concept of honour as 'un complejo sentimiento de dignidad familiar ante la sociedad, cuyo peso recae sobre la conducta sexual femenina', 'La honra en el teatro de García Lorca', *Revista de literatura*, 48.96 (1986), 447–54 (p. 448). 'A complex feeling of family dignity in front of society, the weight of which rests on the sexual behaviour of women'. Malveena McKendrick classifies the Spanish 'Golden Age' as the sixteenth- and seventeenth- centuries. She notes that Spanish theatre 'clearly distinguishes [the Spanish idea of honour] from classical and medieval attitudes to honour, that is, an almost exclusive emphasis on honour as social reputation as distinct from honour as public virtue or personal integrity', 'Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia: A Case of Mimetic Transference?' *The Modern Language Review*, 79.2 (1984), 313–35 (p. 318). Bernarda's understanding of honour is based on these Early Modern ideas of public image, social reputation and outward appearance, which still held sway in Lorca's time. See also Peter L. Podol, 'The Evolution of the Honor Theme in Modern Spanish Drama', *Hispanic Review*, 40.1 (1972), 53–72.

<sup>10</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 238.

<sup>11</sup> 'I don't meddle inside hearts but I want a good *façade* and family harmony.' My emphasis.

<sup>12</sup> 'Take her to her room and dress her *as if she were* a virgin.' My emphasis. Greenfield suggests that the white house in *Bernarda Alba* is a 'shell', an 'outer frame glistening virginally for all to see', ('Poetry and Stagecraft', p. 457).

<sup>13</sup> Greenfield, 'Poetry and Stagecraft', p. 461.

applied expressly to conceal whatever stains may lie in the substance beneath'.<sup>14</sup> Through the motif of cleansing, embodied in both the dramatic action and the dialogue, Lorca reveals both the importance and the strain of maintaining this clinical white façade and communicates the poetic concerns of the work through the actions of the characters. What Edwards sees as 'frenzied cleaning'<sup>15</sup> is one of the first dramatic actions of the play – 'limpia bien todo. Si no ve relucientes las cosas me arrancará los pocos pelos que me quedan' (Poncia, p. 309) – and continues to be a central preoccupation throughout – 'tú empieza a blanquear el patio' (Bernarda, p. 326).<sup>16</sup> For Bernarda, material cleanliness, decency, and social standing are inter-dependent: 'Ella, la más aseada; ella, la más decente; ella, la más alta' (Poncia, p. 310).<sup>17</sup> Lorca's repeated use of the superlative with each adjective reveals Bernarda's extreme expectations of herself and others, and the level of cleanliness and whiteness she demands of her material environment.<sup>18</sup>

Bernarda's obsession with maintaining the white façade is shown to be a source of great mental and physical strain as Lorca explores the vulnerability of the front which she presents to the world and begins to burrow beneath the surface, exposing the growing tensions and burning desires within Bernarda's household through the material colours of the staging. In his 1925 essay 'A Coat of Whitewash: The Law of Ripolin', the architect Le Corbusier ironically reflects on the tyranny of the white surface and its 'moral' authority:

Imagine the results of the Law of Ripolin. Every citizen is required to replace his hangings, his damasks, his wallpapers, his stencils, with a plain coat of white Ripolin.

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<sup>14</sup> Greenfield, 'Poetry and Stagecraft', p. 461.

<sup>15</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 243.

<sup>16</sup> 'Clean everything properly, if Bernarda doesn't see things gleaming she'll pull out the few hairs I've got left', 'start whitening the patio'.

<sup>17</sup> 'She, the cleanest and tidiest; she, the most decent; she, the classiest'.

<sup>18</sup> We also see this obsessive cleaning of white surfaces in *Yerma*. The Fourth Washerwoman's statement that 'cuanto más relumbra la vivienda, más arde por dentro' (p. 450) is equally applicable to the jealousy, hatred, desire, and paranoia fermenting behind the thick white walls in *Bernarda Alba*. 'The more the house shines, the more it burns inside'.

His home is made clean. There are no more dirty, dark corners. Everything is shown as it is [...] Once you have put Ripolin on your walls you will be master of yourself [...] If the house is all white, the outline of things stands out from it without any possibility of mistake; their volume shows clearly; their colour is distinct. The white of whitewash is absolute, everything stands out from it and is recorded absolutely, black on white, it is honest and dependable [...] Whitewash is extremely moral.<sup>19</sup>

Le Corbusier's essay probes the affective power of material whiteness in interior spaces and the medium of architecture.<sup>20</sup> This brings to mind the dramatic significance of the physical white house in *Bernarda Alba*. He also reveals the power of whiteness as an unforgiving background or screen that will accentuate any dirt or stain. In *Bernarda Alba*, the material whiteness of the house becomes an unstable and exacting environment, demanding repeated actions of re-whitening which reflect Bernarda's fear of gossip and her paranoia in visual form. Poncia and the maid are continually trying, and failing, to keep the house as white as Bernarda desires. When Poncia complains that the glass is marked, the Maid replies that: 'Ni con el jabón ni con bayeta se le quitan' (p. 312).<sup>21</sup> Greenfield suggests that the white façade is shown to be 'a superficial veneer of perfection,' a thin and delicate coating which is vulnerable to the staining qualities of life and colour.<sup>22</sup> Bernarda has chosen an exacting material environment as the external representation of her household's honour. However, she is unable to keep up with the demands of that white surface and instead the exacting whitescape exacerbates her paranoia and fixation on honour.

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<sup>19</sup> Le Corbusier, 'The Decorative Art of Today', in *Essential Le Corbusier: L'Esprit Nouveau Articles*, trans. by James I. Dunnett (Oxford: Architectural Press, 1998), pp. 185–92 (p. 186, p. 190 and p. 192). Le Corbusier was a contemporary of Lorca, and Lorca attended his lecture at the Residencia de Estudiantes in 1928. See *Prosa I*, p. 283. Ripolin is a brand of white paint.

<sup>20</sup> See also David Batchelor's discussion of the architects Le Corbusier's and Adolf Loos's views on whiteness in *Chromophobia*, pp. 45–49. Batchelor notes that this privileging of whiteness over hued colour developed later in Le Corbusier's writing. In contrast, in his early essays 'just about every object had a brilliant local colour, and these intense hues were often intermingled with strong blacks and dazzling whites', (*Chromophobia*, p. 45).

<sup>21</sup> 'I can't get them off, even with soap and a cloth'.

<sup>22</sup> Greenfield, 'Poetry and Stagecraft', p. 457.

Lorca reveals whiteness to be a paradoxical force. On the one hand, white is a tyrannical force which demands constant activity to maintain it. On the other hand, white is an extremely vulnerable surface, as any hint of hued colour will dirty it. Due to Bernarda's correlation of honour and whiteness, and of colour and dishonour, any instances of hued colour become charged with dramatic importance and psychological power due to the threat they pose to the whitescape. David Batchelor suggests that this prejudice against and loathing of colour 'masks a fear': 'a fear of contamination and corruption by something that is unknown or unknowable' which manifests itself in the form of 'chromophobia'.<sup>23</sup> We find this fear of the staining force of colour in Lorca's portrayal of Bernarda. Her chromophobia is revealed when she is confronted by visual colour, such as her reaction to Adela's red-and-green fan in Act One:

BERNARDA [...] Niña, dame un abanico.

ADELA Tome usted. (*Le da un abanico redondo con flores rojas y verdes*)

BERNARDA (*Arrojando el abanico al suelo*) ¿Es éste el abanico que se da a una viuda? Dame uno negro y aprende a respetar el luto de tu padre (p. 319).<sup>24</sup>

Although the rejection of a coloured fan during mourning could be seen as culturally appropriate, there are several factors which make this scene more equivocal and reflective of chromophobia. First, the violence of the gesture described in the stage directions belies Bernarda's measured verbal response. The use of the verb 'arrojar', to hurl, rather than something less violent like 'echar', reveals the extreme force of this reaction, a representation of inner tumult translated into corporeal gesture. Secondly, the fan is one of the rare examples of visual colour in the play, and one which is a central part of the dramatic action. Bernarda's

<sup>23</sup> Batchelor, *Chromophobia*, p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> BERNARDA: 'Child, give me a fan'. ADELA: 'Here'. (*She gives her a round fan with red and green flowers*) BERNARDA: (*Hurling the fan to the floor*) 'Is this the fan you give to a widow? Give me a black one and learn to respect the mourning of your father'.

chromophobia is revealed in similarly violent, bodily reactions throughout the play. For example, in Act One she scrubs the make-up from Angustias's face:

ANGUSTIAS    Madre, déjeme usted salir.

BERNARDA    ¿Salir? Después de que te hayas quitado esos polvos de la cara.

¡Suavona! ¡Yeyo! ¡Espejo de tus tías! (*Le quita violentamente con su pañuelo los polvos*) ¡Ahora vete! (p. 337).<sup>25</sup>

Here, Bernarda forcefully erases colour.<sup>26</sup> Bernarda's forceful, physical reactions to colour, signs of her chromophobia, are even dominant when she is not on stage. In Act One Amelia warns Adela, who is wearing her green dress, '¡Si te ve nuestra madre te arrastra del pelo!' (p. 333).<sup>27</sup> Colour threatens Bernarda's authority and moral values, disrupting her controlling whitescape and Lorca uses this powerful rejection of colour to expose the inner turmoil and patent anxieties which lie beneath her dominance and tyranny.

Bernarda has an extreme relationship with white and colour which Lorca emphasises by depicting her chromophobic reactions and by highlighting the abnormal nature of the whitescape. Rather than a purely symbolic phenomenon, Lorca uses the material whiteness of the setting and Bernarda's reactions to hued colour to reflect her paranoia and anxiety in visual form, exploring what lies beneath the façade and bringing abstract emotions to the stage as part of his theatre of poetry. Emma Wilson's reading of material colour as 'the

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<sup>25</sup> ANGUSTIAS: 'Mother, let me go out'. BERNARDA: 'Go out? After you have taken that make-up off your face! Flatterer! Hussy! Image of your aunts! (*She violently scrubs the make-up from Angustias's face with her handkerchief*) Now get out!'

<sup>26</sup> In Jenny Sealey's 2017 production with Graeae at the Manchester Royal Exchange, the viciousness of this scene is emphasised further. Alfred Hickling observes that: 'not content with wiping away the offensive makeup from her daughter's face, [Bernarda] seizes the lipstick and smears it across her [daughter's] cheeks and forehead as if to ensure the humiliation is writ large', 'The House of Bernarda Alba review – Hunter is a domestic dictator in anti-fascist classic', *The Guardian*, 8 February 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/feb/08/the-house-of-bernarda-alba-review-kathryn-hunter-royal-exchange-manchester>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

<sup>27</sup> 'If our mother sees you she'll drag you along by your hair!' The image of being dragged is particularly important as both Adela, in this play, and the Bride, in *Bodas de sangre*, describe their desire as being beyond their control, as if they are being dragged against their will. I discuss the Bride's discourse of somatic wounding in the following chapter.

chromatic representation of a disturbance of the psychic subject' in Krzysztof Kieślowski's 1993 film *Three Colours: Blue* inspires my exploration of the connection between visual colour and Bernarda's psyche in *Bernarda Alba*.<sup>28</sup> Despite the distinctiveness of these sources, the material colour scheme in *Bernarda Alba* can be seen as evocative of Bernarda's psychological state, as blue represents Julie's, the central protagonist, in *Blue*. In her study, Wilson examines how the colour blue, particularly in the form of blue light, is used to convey Julie's grief and pain. Like Julie, Bernarda is suffering from a trauma which is reflected in colour. Yet blue in Kieślowski's film is also used to communicate 'moments of near abstraction, interludes of sensory pleasure', and it disrupts Julie's disconnected state and brings her back to the world with a startling clash of blue light and music.<sup>29</sup> For Bernarda, however, the visual colour scheme represents a negative affective state and a sense of total disconnection because she fails to impose it and sustain it. *Bernarda Alba* does not portray a journey of healing and recovery like *Blue*. Rather, it is the depiction of Bernarda's declining mental health which begins with the death of her husband and the confinement of her family for an eight-year mourning period at the beginning of the play, and ends in Adela's death after Bernarda's increasing oppression of her daughters fails and instead sparks an explosive, desperate desire for personal and sexual freedom. Bernarda's extreme values regarding honour and social appearances lead her to create a claustrophobic, unnatural environment which reflects her obsessive mental state in material form. Rather than 'a dehumanized human being', a 'puppet, Punch-like figure', and a 'one-dimensional character' as Edwards<sup>30</sup> and Virginia Higginbotham have suggested, Bernarda's reactions to colour and whiteness in

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<sup>28</sup> Wilson, 'Three Colours: Blue: Kieślowski, Colour and the Postmodern Subject', p. 350.

<sup>29</sup> Wilson, 'Three Colours: Blue: Kieślowski, Colour and the Postmodern Subject', p. 355. For example, when Julie is napping at the hospital she is woken by the music from her husband's and daughter's funeral. We see this scene through a filter of blue light.

<sup>30</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 239 and p. 269.

the play reveal her to be a complex character of bones-and-blood.<sup>31</sup> Through his theatre of poetry, Lorca communicates Bernarda's troubled inner landscape through the materiality of the staging and exposes the emotions and insecurities which lie beneath the glossy white façade.

Lorca also uses the material colours of the setting to communicate the frustration, desires, and suffering of Bernarda's daughters, especially Adela, with her youth, hope, and passion, who is the most significant counterpoint to Bernarda's tyranny. Whilst for Bernarda hued colour is the cause of fear and paranoia, white can also spark negative affective states and anxiety, opening up a more equivocal reading of reactions to whiteness and hued colour. Dyer's study of representations of racial whiteness Western visual culture has implications for our understanding of how whiteness sparks anxiety in Adela as he explores both the symbolic links between whiteness and death and the horror which whiteness can provoke. Dyer suggests that 'to be really, absolutely white is to be nothing [...] to be nothing is to be dead'.<sup>32</sup> Dyer's idea of whiteness as a void is especially significant when we consider whiteness in *Bernarda Alba*, due to the shared root of 'blanco' and 'blank' in Castilian. In Act One, Adela reveals her fear of being absorbed into the whiteness of the house:

ADELA (*Rompiendo a llorar con ira*) ¡No, no me acostumbraré! Yo no quiero estar encerrada. No quiero que se me pongan las carnes como a vosotras. ¡No quiero perder

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<sup>31</sup> Higginbotham argues that 'because her behaviour is so predictable, Bernarda resembles the villain of a puppet farce, whose body jerks into stiff but automatic poses. Like a marionette whose wooden face is carved into a grimace, she insults the villagers, threatens her daughters with petty violence, and keeps her aged, demented mother under lock and key', *The Comic Spirit of Federico García Lorca* (Austin, TX, and London: University of Texas Press, 1976), p.113.

<sup>32</sup> Dyer, p. 79 and p. 81.

mi blancura en estas habitaciones! ¡Mañana me pondré mi vestido verde y me echaré a pasear por la calle! ¡Yo quiero salir! (p. 335).<sup>33</sup>

Adela's reference to 'blancura' here creates a paradox because it suggests a contrast between her whiteness, on the one hand, and the skin of her sisters and the whiteness of the house on the other. Adela suggests that her sisters have already been absorbed by the white house and that they have become blank and sterile; they have lost their physicality and become literally hue white like the walls. In contrast, Adela's skin is still luminous and vital. Edwards suggests that her skin has a 'lustre' which conflicts with both 'the dull and uniform whiteness of the room' and the 'sallowness' of her sisters' skin.<sup>34</sup> These multiple evocations of material whiteness are indicative of the complex and labile values of colour in Lorca's theatre of poetry. Both Greenfield and Ziomek see a tension between sterility and fertility in these different forms of material whiteness. Ziomek argues that white is an important material reflection in Lorca's development of the 'abnegación emocional' of the Alba women which is juxtaposed with the 'significado sexual' of the stallion, the lamb, and Angustias's pearl engagement ring.<sup>35</sup> Greenfield suggests that these more natural images of whiteness – the huge white stallion and the sperm-like allusions to sea foam in María Josefa's speech in Act Three – represent more specifically 'an elemental masculine force' which threatens Bernarda's authority.<sup>36</sup> For Ziomek, Greenfield, and Edwards it is the antiseptic whiteness of negation and death which dominates. Greenfield notes that 'the whiteness of the house, the white of sterility,' ultimately triumphs 'over the white foam of life and productivity'.<sup>37</sup> Edwards agrees, observing that 'all that is creative is overwhelmed' by the blankness of the

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<sup>33</sup> ADELA: (*Bursting into tears of rage*) 'No, no I won't get used to it! I don't want to be locked up. I don't want my flesh to become like yours. I don't want to lose my whiteness in these rooms! Tomorrow I'll put on my green dress and I'll go for a walk down the street! I want to get out!'

<sup>34</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 249.

<sup>35</sup> Ziomek, p. 83. 'Denial of their own emotions', 'sexual meaning'.

<sup>36</sup> Greenfield, 'Poetry and Stagecraft', p. 458.

<sup>37</sup> Greenfield, 'Poetry and Stagecraft', p. 461.



whitescape with its connotations of death and barrenness.<sup>38</sup> Adela's fear of being absorbed by the whitescape turns out to be well-founded. Whilst Adela has enjoyed the passions of a physical relationship, the creative force of her body is negated by her suicide. A state of whiteness which is so extreme that either death or madness constitute the only 'escape' is the ultimate proof that Bernarda has created a warped world within her walls.

Throughout the play Lorca creates an overwhelming sense of claustrophobia and imprisonment and reflects the sensory deprivation of the whitescape and the core poetic image of whiteness in the lighting, or lack of light, moments of silence, and the intonation and patterns of the characters' speech. In Act One, Bernarda tells her daughters that during their eight years of mourning 'no ha de entrar en esta casa el viento de la calle', demanding that they pretend that 'hemos tapiado con ladrillos puertas y ventanas' (p. 320).<sup>39</sup> Some of these instances are metaphorical, such as Bernarda's immurement of her family and her threat of chaining her daughters: 'tengo cinco cadenas para vosotras' (p. 366).<sup>40</sup> However, the daughters' movements are also physically limited to the house and grounds, the windows are barred, and during the wake María Josefa is locked in her room and gagged by the Maid: 'me ha costado mucho trabajo sujetarla [...] Tuve durante el duelo que taparle varias veces la boca con un costal vacío' (p. 321).<sup>41</sup> The sense of imprisonment is compounded by cries for release throughout Act One which creates a discourse of sequestering: '¡Yo quiero salir!' (Adela, p. 335), 'Madre, déjeme usted salir' (Angustias, p. 337), '¡Déjame salir, Bernarda!' (María Josefa, p. 339).<sup>42</sup> This is not a house or a home, it is a domestic prison. In his 1986 article 'The Austere Abode', Morris argues that Bernarda's 'casa' is a perversion of the

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<sup>38</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 243.

<sup>39</sup> 'Not a breath of wind will enter from the street outside', 'we have bricked up the doors and windows'.

<sup>40</sup> 'I have five chains for you'.

<sup>41</sup> 'It was a real struggle to restrain her [...] I had to stuff an empty sack in her mouth several times during the wake'.

<sup>42</sup> 'I want to go out!', 'Mother, let me go out,', 'let me out, Bernarda!'

saccharine ‘hogar’ extolled in the Granada press of the early 1900s.<sup>43</sup> He notes that the house is referred to by the characters through a range of negative metaphors, such as, ‘infierno’ (Angustias, p. 343), ‘convento’, ‘casa de guerra’ (Poncia, p. 355 and p. 392), and ‘presidio’ (Adela, p. 401).<sup>44</sup> In conversation with Carlos Morla Lynch in 1936, Lorca described the home on which the play was based as ‘un infierno mudo y frío en ese sol africano, sepultura de gente viva bajo la férula inflexible de cancerbero oscuro’.<sup>45</sup> Here, Lorca captures the ideas of hell, a living tomb, and even the Greek underworld, as ‘cancerbero’ can be interpreted as ‘Cerberus’, Hades’s three-headed dog which guards the gates of the underworld to prevent the dead from escaping. Allusions to heat and fire – ‘era la una de la madrugada y salía fuego de la tierra’ (Poncia, p. 344) and ‘carbón ardiendo’ (Bernarda, p. 376) – perpetuate these images of hell.<sup>46</sup> Whilst fire can be seen as literally colourful, the very nature of hell is centred on sensory deprivation and suffering, suggesting that the chromatic desire of the characters, their desire for colour which is blended with their desire for personal and sexual freedom, will not be fulfilled. In contrast, their idea of hell would be to exist forever inside this cold, anaesthetised blankness. This is a ‘mute’ and ‘cold’ hell where the sun cannot reach. In Act One Magdalena laments: ‘sé que yo no me voy a casar. Prefiero llevar sacos al molino. Todo menos estar sentada días y días dentro de esta sala oscura’ (p. 320). Whilst light would have emphasised the whiteness of the walls, Lorca has chosen to set the house in a pervasive gloom, adding to the sensory deprivation of the characters that is shared with the spectator.

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<sup>43</sup> C. Brian Morris, ‘The “Austere Abode”: Lorca’s *La casa de Bernarda Alba*’, *Anales de la Literatura Española Contemporánea*, 11.1-2 (1986), 129–41 (p. 131).

<sup>44</sup> See Morris, ‘Austere Abode’, pp. 132–33. ‘Prison’, ‘hell’, ‘convent’, ‘house of war’. To these terms Morris adds ‘mortuary’ and ‘madhouse’, whilst Delgado suggests ‘fortress’ and ‘coffin’, and the theatre critic Michael Billington sees the house as ‘a prison courtyard, a nunnery and an asylum’. See Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 107, and Gwynne Edwards, ‘Productions of *La casa de Bernarda Alba*’, *Anales de la Literatura Española Contemporánea*, 25.3 (2000), 699–728 (p. 721).

<sup>45</sup> Lorca cited in Ramsden, pp. xxxii–xxxiii. ‘A cold and mute hell beneath that African sun, a tomb of living people under the inflexible rule of a dark Cerberus’.

<sup>46</sup> ‘It was one in the morning and fire was coming out of the ground,’ ‘burning coal’.

Edwards suggests that *Bernarda Alba* is defined by a ‘terrible sense of enclosure’ from the beginning of the play, arguing that ‘the room with its thick walls, its oppressive silence, and its depressing and inescapable uniformity of colour’ is the ‘physical symbol’ of the many ways in which the characters are constrained, an oppressive environment which is also emphasised by the searing heat and by the sounds outside the house such as the tolling of bells.<sup>47</sup> He argues that the occasional intrusions of light and colour disrupt the ‘general effect of dullness’ inside the house:

These splashes of light and colour, conjur[e] up a different kind of world [...] The effect of the light that suddenly floods in as a door is opened and is then gone again is, like those other splashes of colour, not only to suggest a different world outside the house, but, by so doing, to heighten the impression of the total isolation of Bernarda’s household from that world.<sup>48</sup>

These brief surges of light and colour emphasise the extreme environment of Bernarda’s house by providing a marked contrast between the gloom and relentless whiteness of the *casa* and the bright and vibrant world outside. The absence of stage directions regarding lighting is highly unusual and contrasts with Lorca’s other plays where coloured light is a central device, for example in the play *Mariana Pineda*, which I discuss in Chapter Four. By excluding colour from the lighting Lorca extends the ‘unrelieved monotony’ and uniformity of material colour in the play to other aspects of the staging, using the pervasive gloom to reflect the characters’ inner despair and what Edwards calls ‘the colourlessness of [the characters’] existence’ in physical form as part of his theatre of poetry.<sup>49</sup> In Act Two there is a rare instance when light breaks through: ‘*Todas oyen en un silencio traspasado por el sol*’

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<sup>47</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 240 and p. 243. In Sealey’s production these outside sounds often took on a startling quality. For example, in Act Three when the stallion kicks the stable walls, the resounding boom made the audience jump.

<sup>48</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 276.

<sup>49</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, pp. 266–67.

(p. 357).<sup>50</sup> Sunlight temporarily traverses the silence, the gloom, and the whiteness of the house. This momentary chink of light is combined with the reapers' song outside which in turn evokes the male freedom which the oppressed daughters are denied by their gender, their mourning period, and their mother's strict moral views. This glimpse of the outside world only causes them to imagine a life they cannot have: '*Martirio queda sentada en la silla baja con la cabeza entre las manos*' (p. 358).<sup>51</sup> As the characters suffer and wither in the ascetic house the play grows gradually darker until Act Three, which is set at night. Lighting is referenced in the stage directions in the final act but only to indicate a lack – '*Las puertas, iluminadas por la luz de los interiores, dan un tenue fulgor a la escena. En el centro, una mesa con un quinqué*' (p. 378) – and grows still scarcer when Poncia and the Maid leave the room, taking the lamp – '*La escena queda casi a oscuras*' (p. 394).<sup>52</sup> Rather than merely symbolic connotations – darkness representing the characters' movement 'towards their tragic fate' as Edwards argues, for example – the effect adds to the sense of increasing claustrophobia and reinforces the idea of the house as a domestic prison.<sup>53</sup> What becomes clear from the sequestering of the household and the extreme white-colour dichotomy is that the material setting is the sensory and visual representation of a psyche which is deeply troubled.

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<sup>50</sup> 'They all listen in a silence pierced by sunlight'. Lorca's use of 'traspasar' here calls to mind Mavor's reading of the lingering impact of the punctum which I explore in my discussion of bodily colour and emotional 'bruising' in *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma* in Chapter Three and in *Doña Rosita* in Chapter Four. This scene captures the suffering of the women as they remain trapped in the whitescape and excluded from the world of light and colour outside.

<sup>51</sup> 'Martirio remains sitting in the low chair, her head in her hands'.

<sup>52</sup> 'The doorways, illuminated by the light from the inside rooms, give the scene a soft glow. In the centre, a table with an oil lamp', 'the scene is left in almost total darkness'.

<sup>53</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 240. Heavy doors and iron grilles or window bars, continuing the achromatic motif of imprisonment, are found in Margarita Xirgu's, Phillips's, Nuria Espert's and Polly Teale's productions. In their stagings, Bardem and Saura increase the height of windows and doors, to suggest that 'no hay salida ni escape', (Bardem cited in Edwards, 'Productions', p. 707). Delgado comments on Teale's use of a large double door, smaller openings, locks, and grilles and the 'imposing portal of bolted prison-like doors with grilles and slats that filtered in light from the outside world', (Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 112). Roni Toren's set design for Gadi Roll's 2008 production (Belgrade Theatre, Coventry) takes the parallel even further, transposing the set from a house to a high-security prison with metal walls.

As well as reflecting the restrictive environment of the white house in the lighting, Lorca extends this occlusion of colour to the suppression of speech in the play. In his probing of white in modern French poetry and art, Eric Robertson finds what he calls a ‘conflation of visual and auditory sensation’ and a paralleling of whiteness and silence, particularly in the white spaces in sheet music which represent pauses and the ‘retinal silences’ of Simon Hantaï’s paintings.<sup>54</sup> Moments of silence in *Bernarda Alba* can thus similarly be seen as an auditory extension of the visual values of whiteness, which in turn act as a visual silence due to its values of absence and vacancy and its resistance to hued colour. *Bernarda Alba* is framed with a void of silence: there is a ‘*gran silencio umbroso*’ (p. 308) which complements the ‘*blanquísima*’ setting as the play opens, and ‘silence’ is the first word which Bernarda speaks – ‘(A la Criada) ¡Silencio!’ (p. 314) – and her last as the curtain falls – ‘¡Silencio, silencio he dicho! ¡Silencio!’ (p. 404).<sup>55</sup> Silence becomes part of the white claustrophobia of the house, continually re-instated in both stage directions and, ironically, dialogue, as Lorca extends the core image of whiteness to all of the aspects of the staging. Lorca’s use of pauses acts as a staccato of silence, piercing the dialogue, such as when Martirio tries to tell Amelia about Adela’s affair in Act Two:

MARTIRIO Amelia.

AMELIA (*En la puerta*) ¿Qué?

(*Pausa*)

MARTIRIO Nada.

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<sup>54</sup> Robertson, p. 323. Robertson also draws our attention to Rimbaud’s poem Vowels (1871) where the letter ‘e’ is elided, thus creating an absence of a particularly dominant sound when the poem is read aloud or in our head. Rimbaud also associates each sound with a colour. ‘E’ is white, thus emphasising the relation between whiteness and silencing. Patricia Lynn Duffy sees the publication of this poem as marking a resurgence of interest in the phenomenon of ‘audition colorée’ or ‘coloured hearing’ in Symbolist and Romantic circles in the late-nineteenth century, ‘Synesthesia in Literature’, in *Oxford Handbook of Synesthesia*, ed. by Julia Simner and Edward M. Hubbard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 647–70 (p. 648). I explore Lorca’s mingling of colour and the non-visual senses in Chapter Four.

<sup>55</sup> ‘A great brooding silence’, ‘(To the maid) Silence!’, ‘Silence! Silence, I said! Silence!’

(Pausa)

AMELIA ¿Por qué me llamaste?

(Pausa)

MARTIRIO Se me escapó. Fue sin darme cuenta.

(Pausa)

AMELIA Acuéstate un poco (pp. 360–61).<sup>56</sup>

Lorca's use of silence in this scene is a prime example of the economy of language in the play as a whole. Morris praises the 'tightness and restraint' of the dialogue in *Bernarda Alba*, suggesting that the play also 'impresses by what it does not say'.<sup>57</sup> Silence is as central to the action of the play as the characters' speech as it is indicative of their inability to connect and communicate and conveys the complex relationships between them. As Edwards notes, Bernarda's tyranny 'becomes inevitably her daughters' tyranny of each other', which in turn communicates 'the power of passion to set individuals against each other' and their 'increasing isolation' even from one another despite their shared plight.<sup>58</sup> The scene in Act Two in which the theft of Pepe's photo is discovered is a particularly significant example of the interplay between actual silence, indicated in the stage directions, and the act of silencing in the dialogue. The scene oscillates between Bernarda's demands for answers – '¿Cuál de vosotras? (*Silencio*) ¡Contestarme! (*Silencio*)', (Bernarda to her daughters, p. 362) – and calls for silence – '¡Silencio!', '¡Silencio digo!' (pp. 365–66).<sup>59</sup> Through his use of silence

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<sup>56</sup> MARTIRIO: 'Amelia'. (*Pause*) AMELIA: (*At the door*) 'What?' MARTIRIO: 'Nothing'. (*Pause*) AMELIA: 'Why did you call me?' (*Pause*) MARTIRIO: 'It slipped out. I did it without realising'. (*Pause*) AMELIA: 'Get some rest'.

<sup>57</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba*, p. 117.

<sup>58</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, pp. 251–52.

<sup>59</sup> 'Which of you was it? (*Silence*) Answer me! (*Silence*), 'Silence!' 'Silence I said!' Sealey's production offers an especially novel portrayal of this white claustrophobic silence as the Graeae theatre company use D/deaf and disabled actors and a combination of sign language, captioning, interpreting, and audio description. 'The silent space she creates for her character is as telling and as simmering as a louder one. It's a kind of literal embodiment of the quiet that Bernarda often demands, her suicide being the ultimate kind of silence', (Haworth, *Manchester Review*, 3 February 2017). Alfred Hickling notes that 'when [Bernarda] has the final word, it is not a word at all, but a terse repetition of the BSL gesture commanding silence', (Hickling, *The Guardian*, 8 February 2017).

throughout the play, Lorca encapsulates the visual silencing of hued colour in the suppression or absence of speech.

The dominance of whiteness is not merely found in empty space or pockets of silence which resist speech but is also captured in the tone of the dialogue itself. In *Writing Degree Zero* (1953), Roland Barthes develops his concept of ‘white writing’, a sparse, stripped-down discourse. This ‘écriture blanche’ represents a new, neutral writing and a ‘silence of form’ which ‘deliberately forgoes any elegance or ornament’.<sup>60</sup> Something approaching this ascetic, minimalist, ‘white writing’ can be seen in *Bernarda Alba*, where the stark whitescape is reflected in silence and pared-down dialogue. As Edwards observes, the dialogue is ‘stripped of needless clutter as are the sets themselves’.<sup>61</sup> Bernarda’s constant negation, use of imperatives, demands for silence, and the brevity of sentence and line length create an abrupt and aggressive discourse centred on absence and denial. When Poncia suggests donating some of Bernarda’s dead husband’s clothes, Bernarda exclaims ‘*Nada. ¡Ni un botón! ¡Ni el pañuelo con que le hemos tapado la cara!*’ (p. 327).<sup>62</sup> Likewise, her imperatives are often negative: ‘Magdalena, no llores’, (p. 314) and ‘no procures descubrirlas, no le preguntes y, desde luego, que no te vea llorar jamás,’ (to Angustias, p. 385).<sup>63</sup> Through silence, absence, and negation, Lorca evokes the whitescape in the ‘white’ writing of the play. The French writer Annie Ernaux’s practice of ‘écriture plate’, or ‘flat writing’, which Jeannet has called ‘clinique’, ‘blanche’, and ‘minérale’, complements and expands on Barthes’s idea of ‘white

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<sup>60</sup> Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, pp. 82–84. Barthes sees this white writing as epitomised in Camus’s *The Outsider* (1942). Eylem Aksoy Alp agrees, suggesting that the link between Camus’s writing and whiteness is unmistakable: ‘L’utilisation métaphorique de la ‘blancheur’ pour l’écriture minimaliste de Camus va de soi puisque, au lieu de parsemer de couleur son texte à la façon d’un peintre, il prend soin d’utiliser une syntaxe très simple, un vocabulaire presque élémentaire ou scolaire’. ‘The metaphorical use of “whiteness” for the minimalist writing of Camus is self-evident since, instead of sprinkling color with his text in the way of a painter, he takes care to use a very simple syntax, a vocabulary which is almost elementary or school-like’, ‘De l’écriture blanche d’Albert Camus à l’écriture plate d’Annie Ernaux’, *Frankofoni*, 27 (2015), 189–202 (p. 193).

<sup>61</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 268.

<sup>62</sup> ‘*Nothing. Not even a button! Not even the cloth which we used to cover his face!*’ My emphasis.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Magdalena, don’t cry’, ‘don’t try to find things out, don’t ask him about it, and, of course, never let him see you cry’.

writing'.<sup>64</sup> This concept of 'écriture plate' offers a way of exploring what Morris suggests is an oral 'flatness' in the dialogue of *Bernarda Alba* which mirrors 'the visual flatness of the play'.<sup>65</sup> Bernarda's direct, unadorned, and negative dialogue is complemented by what Edwards sees as the 'leaden and lifeless' dialogue of Magdalena and Martirio which captures the characters' inner despair in verbal form, such as Martirio's statement that 'yo hago las cosas sin fe, pero como un reloj' in Act One (p. 327).<sup>66</sup> By reflecting the dull monotony of the white walls in the lighting, the moments of silence, and the dialogue of the play Lorca encapsulates the core poetic image of whiteness throughout multiple aspects of the staging as part of his theatre of poetry. The combined effect is the creation of a domestic dystopia of whiteness; this is a disturbing and negative idea of home which is indicative of Bernarda's extreme views and the precarity of her state of mind.

However, instances of visual and verbal colour continually remind the audience that Bernarda's unblemished whitescape is an illusion which is reflected in the weakening of the whitescape in the stage directions as the walls become 'lightly blued'. Whilst Bernarda demands a 'buena fachada', her failure to consider what she cannot control – 'lo que [cada uno] piensa por dentro' (p. 384) – means that her white façade is a false front and a sham, as the very nature of façade implies.<sup>67</sup> As Poncia warns Bernarda, 'ni tú ni nadie puede vigilar por el interior de los pechos' (p. 390).<sup>68</sup> Even the name 'alba' belies the possibility of absolute whiteness, as the flowers of the 'white' alba rose are actually pinkish-white. The audience is being shown Bernarda's visual world yet her chromophobia means that she

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<sup>64</sup> Ernaux and Jeannet, *L'écriture comme un couteau*, loc. 307 and loc. 842–847. 'Clinical', 'white', 'mineral'. Aksoy Alp explicitly makes the connection between Barthes's 'white writing' and Ernaux's 'flat writing' in her 2015 article. She proposes that both styles are 'fragmentaire[s], asyndétique[s], coupante[s], lapidaire[s]', (p. 199). 'Fragmentary, asyndetic, sharp, lapidary'.

<sup>65</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba*, p. 105.

<sup>66</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 270.

<sup>67</sup> 'What [each person] thinks on the inside'.

<sup>68</sup> 'Neither you nor anybody else can police inside people's chests'.



becomes blind to some of the intrusions of colour: ‘Ahora estás ciega’ (Poncia, p. 367).<sup>69</sup> Morris suggests this is a wilful denial of the truth, the sign of an ‘ostrich mentality’.<sup>70</sup> It is only at the beginning of the play when the stage is empty of actors that the setting is ‘blanquísima.’ The sequestering of Bernarda’s household is equally illusory, indicated by the use of the figurative ‘haceros cuenta’ when Bernarda speaks of bricking up the walls and windows.<sup>71</sup> As Morris observes, the very presence of the audience shows Bernarda’s ‘quarantine’ to be a failure from the beginning as Lorca ‘takes us inside [the house] and proves how misplaced her trust in walls is by removing one of them: the one between her and the reader or spectator’.<sup>72</sup> Pure, isolated whiteness would mean nothingness: a house without inhabitants, a play without plot, text, characters, or audience. Adela’s death does not mean she had been reclaimed by the whitescape, as Bernarda perceives. Rather, she has made her creative mark upon it. Even in death Adela’s more pallid body will not be white; her body will show lividness, the ‘bluish’ discoloration of the corpse, and the marks on her neck made by the rope.

The blackness indicated by the presumably black-and-white photographic documentary image also subverts the authority of the whitescape from the very beginning of the play.<sup>73</sup> The vitality of the characters and the action of the play pushes back against the whitescape, challenging its static, unbroken monotony. Whilst the play begins with an empty stage and the walls as ‘blanquísima’, this extreme whiteness is immediately challenged by the arrival of the black-clad characters. As Delgado has noted, the women dressed in black

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<sup>69</sup> ‘Now you are blind.’

<sup>70</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba*, p. 77.

<sup>71</sup> ‘Pretend’.

<sup>72</sup> Morris, ‘Austere Abode’, p. 138.

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion of the influence of photography on the play see C. Christopher Soufas Jr, ‘Dialectics of Vision: Pictorial vs. Photographic Representations in Lorca’s *La casa de Bernarda Alba*’, *Ojancano*, 5 (1991), 52–66, and *Audience and Authority in the Modernist Theater of Federico García Lorca* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1996), pp. 130–38.

contrast with the white walls, ‘like black stains on a landscape primed for visibility’.<sup>74</sup> The women contrast physically with the whitescape in both their costume and their corporeal colour. As Dyer points out, even ‘white’ people are not hue white.<sup>75</sup> The play is replete with black-on-white contrasts.<sup>76</sup> For example, in the final Act the white stallion is contrasted with the night sky – ‘¡Blanco! Doble de grande, llenando todo lo oscuro’ (Adela, p. 387) – and the black shawls are juxtaposed with white nightgowns.<sup>77</sup> The nightgowns themselves contrast with the black garb of the previous acts, as Simon Haworth observes in his review of Jennifer Sealey’s 2017 production for the Manchester Royal Exchange.<sup>78</sup> There are specks of black throughout the play: the markings of the hyena, the leopard, and the ‘hormiguita’ in María Josefa’s song in Act Three (pp. 394–95) and the fleas which ‘pepper’ Adela’s legs in Act One: ‘unas cuantas pulgas que me han acribillado las piernas’ (p. 333).<sup>79</sup> These instances of blackness are like ink marks against the blankness of the whitescape, an inherently creative force. Black is shown to be a process, particularly in the form of dyeing. In Act One, Martirio suggests spitefully that Adela dye her iconic green dress black: ‘Lo que puedes hacer es teñirlo de negro’ (p. 333). Whilst the women must wear black following mourning customs, the dyeing of clothes shows the transition to blackness as a process of staining and saturation like the black ink or printed text gradually filling the white page. The very concept of black-and-white photography suggests that blackness will continually intrude on the whitescape

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<sup>74</sup> Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 106. Greenfield agrees, arguing that ‘[white] is then, in all its obviousness, a spotless coating of whitewash applied expressly to conceal whatever stains may lie in the substance beneath. The stains in this case are the seven black-robed women who reside within the house’, (*Poetry and Stagecraft*, p. 457).

<sup>75</sup> Dyer, p. 42.

<sup>76</sup> The contrast between black and white is a central preoccupation in productions of the play. For example, in Calixto Bieito’s more abstract 1998 production with scenographer Alfons Flores (Teatro María Guerrero, Madrid) the set was, according to Delgado, ‘a white vertical panel against which the black clad performers moved like eerie shadows’. She adds that Robin Phillips’s 1973 production with the set designer Daphne Dare (Greenwich Theatre, London) also sought to emphasise the element of blackness in the play, creating a set which used ‘the black walls of the theatre as a contrast to one white wall and floor’, (*Federico García Lorca*, p. 114).

<sup>77</sup> ‘White! Twice as big, filling the darkness’.

<sup>78</sup> Simon Haworth, ‘The House of Bernarda Alba, the Royal Exchange’, *Manchester Review*, 3 February 2017 <<http://www.themanchesterreview.co.uk/?p=7196>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

<sup>79</sup> ‘Little ant.’ ‘Some fleas which have peppered my legs with bites’.

from the beginning of the play. However, the action of the play itself also stains the white background in the form of blood, spittle, marks, footprints, and make-up. Bernarda's idea of pure whiteness is an impossible goal and a hollow facade, which is further emphasised by acts of cleaning that ironically lead to more staining: 'sangre en las manos tengo de fregarlo todo' (the Maid to Poncia, p. 310).<sup>80</sup> The act of scouring the material house and its contents to reveal whiteness in turn abrades the white skin to expose colour, the creative potential of the body staining the sterile whitescape.

Due to the occlusion of colour, when it does appear in visual form – the red-and-green fan and Adela's green dress in Act One, and the blue tint of the walls which has appeared in Act Three – it has a powerful effect on the audience, particularly after Bernarda's reaction to the fan. The effect which Lorca creates through this juxtaposition on the material stage is one of *jouissance* or 'bliss' which Barthes describes as an eruptive and galvanising force. In his discussion of artist Cy Twombly, Barthes suggests that even the briefest appearance of colour has a 'lacerating' effect as it materializes 'like an apparition' which disappears in the blink of an eye.<sup>81</sup> It is precisely due to its scarcity that hued colour has this shocking impact in *Bernarda Alba*, however briefly it appears on stage. Lorca invests colour with a disruptive, unsettling quality from the beginning when he warns the audience that the play is a photographic documentary, therefore subverting expectations when he introduces colour. Representations of colour are thus significant due to the chromophobia, anxiety, and chromatic desire that they spark and reflect and because of their impossibility. For example, the red-and-green fan in Act One immediately follows the image of the two hundred women dressed in black who contrast with the extremely white walls. The use of visual colour at this point in the play as part of the dramatic action has a particularly unsettling effect as it disrupts the white-and-black colour scheme which had just been so forcefully introduced. The scarcity

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<sup>80</sup> 'I've got blood on my hands from scrubbing everything'.

<sup>81</sup> Roland Barthes, 'Cy Twombly', p. 166.

of colour in *Bernarda Alba* means that it becomes imbued with a stimulating, unsettling quality every time it appears on stage in contrast to the stark and ascetic blankness of the whitescape.

The characters of María Josefa and Adela are the most important in terms of this colourful challenge to Bernarda's white tyranny. In her first appearance in Act One, María Josefa is described as '*ataviada con flores en la cabeza y en el pecho*' (p. 338).<sup>82</sup> Although Lorca does not stipulate that the flowers are coloured, they have often been shown as such in stage productions, perhaps due to her association with verbal colour and rebellion. In the same act, María Josefa breaches the colour taboo, bringing colour to the whitescape as the Maid describes her as wearing 'anillos' and 'pendientes de amatistas' (p. 321).<sup>83</sup> Like Adela's green dress, María Josefa's jewels and her verbal colour – 'leopardo' (p. 394), 'hyena' (p. 394), 'coral' (p. 395), 'chocolate' (p. 396), 'trigo' (p. 396), 'ranas' (p. 396)<sup>84</sup> – disrupt the whitescape, suggesting an alternative world of 'liberty, power, and creativity'.<sup>85</sup> Her madness and eccentricity and the fantasy world captured in her dialogue only serve to emphasise the startling appearance of visual colour.<sup>86</sup> However, Adela is a much more powerful counterpoint as she has greater stage presence and presents a more obvious challenge to Bernarda's authority in visual form. When colour intrudes in the play, it is also often associated with Adela: the coloured fan which she gives to Bernarda, the bluing of the walls, and the green dress, in terms of visual colour, and 'sandías' (p. 333), 'fuego' (p. 352), 'cuatro mil bengalas amarillas' (p. 352), 'sangre' (p. 353), 'maroma' (p. 374), and 'león' (p. 401) in her dialogue.<sup>87</sup> Adela's views on colour are essentially the reverse of Bernarda's: her anxiety

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<sup>82</sup> 'Adorned with flowers on her head and chest'.

<sup>83</sup> 'Rings', 'amethyst earrings'.

<sup>84</sup> 'Leopard, hyena, coral, chocolate, wheat, frogs.'

<sup>85</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 247.

<sup>86</sup> In Sealey's production, María Josefa's 'colourfulness' is strongly emphasised: 'Paddy Glynn's María is all feather boas, excessive make-up and layered chintzy colours, bringing a rebellious dose of glamour to the forcibly sober dress and controlled deportment of the household [...]', (Howarth, *Manchester Review*).

<sup>87</sup> 'Watermelons', 'fire', 'four thousand yellow flares', 'blood', 'rope', 'lion'.

is sparked by whiteness and she desires colour. In Act Two when Adela expresses her fear of the whitescape, of losing her 'blancura', her chromatic desire is also revealed: '¡Mañana me pondré mi vestido verde y me echaré a pasear por la calle! (p. 335)'.<sup>88</sup> The importance of the green dress – one of the rare examples of bold, hued colour in the play – is twofold. First, it has an effect of colour bliss on the audience due to the scarcity of hued colour throughout the play and it acts as a vibrant contrast to the dominance of material whiteness. What Edwards calls the 'freshness and vitality' of Adela's green dress also stands in stark contrast to the mourning garments of the other women.<sup>89</sup> Secondly, the green dress represents Adela's physical desire for sexual and personal freedom and the threat she poses to Bernarda's authority in material form. Morris sees the dress as Adela's 'standard in her private campaign for personal liberty' and as representative of her 'youthful insouciance and her mental resistance' in contrast to the other characters.<sup>90</sup> The vibrant and subversive nature of Adela's green dress is the visual reflection of the burning desire which consumes her. For example, when Poncia warns Adela not to pursue Pepe and bring dishonour into the house in Act Two, Adela replies: 'por encima de mi madre saltaría para apagarme este fuego que tengo levantado por piernas y boca' (p. 352).<sup>91</sup> Through this juxtaposition of material greenness and images of fire Lorca appeals to and represents the *blissful* body. In *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975) Barthes probes the erotic values of the novel, suggesting that bliss as a disruptive and ecstatic state of affective impact is also centred on the sensual body and can be seen as an orgasmic force due to its explosive capacity. Barthes speaks of a 'body of bliss consisting solely of erotic relations' that is spurred by 'the fires of language (those living fires,

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<sup>88</sup> 'Tomorrow I'll put on my green dress and I'll go for a walk down the street!'

<sup>89</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 249.

<sup>90</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba*, p. 49.

<sup>91</sup> 'I would leap over my mother to quench this fire which is burning through my legs and my mouth'. Images of burning are also an important part of my discussion of the Bride's discourse of bodily colour in *Bodas de sangre* in Chapter Three.

intermittent lights, wandering features strewn in the text like seeds [...]).<sup>92</sup> Barthes's reading of the blissful impact of the text in terms of the body in literature captures the power of colour bliss to spark and reflect desire, offering a fuller understanding of my reading of chromatic desire in *Bernarda Alba*. The powerful image of Adela's chromatic desire as a burning, a 'fuego', suggests that Adela is being consumed not just by the 'fires of language', but by fires of visual colour and desire. Bernarda's attempts to control and subjugate colour only increase the urgency and intensity of Adela's chromatic desire. As Edwards observes, Bernarda's obsession with honour and whiteness 'blind[s] [her] to the reality of her daughters' needs yet simultaneously sharpen[s] them'.<sup>93</sup> This growing chromatic pressure is complemented by references to storms in the dialogue and by the white stallion kicking the walls in Act Three.<sup>94</sup> Kathleen Dolan suggests that each Act surges like a wave, 'each one building towards its own climax' and forming 'part of a whole which appears to move in a horizontal line toward a single, conclusive catastrophe'.<sup>95</sup> Adela's chromatic desire is presented as an unstoppable force, building in intensity towards a moment of eruptive, orgasmic colour bliss. The bluing of the walls is the material representation of this impending climax as chromatic desire becomes such a powerful force that the white house is permanently changed.

Lorca also uses the characters' dialogue to capture the key dialectic between hued colour and whiteness in the play at an oral as well as visual level. Rather than entirely 'white' or 'flat', much of the dialogue in *Bernarda Alba* can be seen as 'sharp' or 'colourful'. As well as developing her concept of 'flat' writing, Ernaux has also explored the idea of 'l'écriture

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<sup>92</sup> Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, pp. 16–17.

<sup>93</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 238.

<sup>94</sup> For example, Bernarda tells her daughters 'yo veía la tormenta venir, pero no creía que estallara tan pronto' (p. 366), whilst Ponica warns the maid 'hay una tormenta en cada cuarto. El día que estallen nos barrerán a todas' (p. 392). 'I saw the storm coming but I didn't expect it to explode so soon', 'there is a storm in each bedroom. The day it explodes it will sweep us all away'. Lorca's use of 'estallar' in both of these examples emphasises the violence and suddenness of this impending climax.

<sup>95</sup> Kathleen Dolan, 'Time, Irony and Negation in Lorca's Last Three Plays', *Hispania*, 63.3 (1980), 514–22 (p. 521).

comme un couteau’ or ‘knife-writing’. The idea of ‘writing like a knife’ captures the dynamic between flatness and sharpness in *Bernarda Alba*: the leadenness of Magdalena’s and Martirio’s dialogue and the blunt, violent, cutting essence of Bernarda’s voice. Whilst Bernarda’s dialogue is pared-down and minimalist, it is also passionate and, literally, loud. The sparseness of her discourse does not imply the elimination of emotional language and expressive punctuation that ‘white’ and ‘flat’ writing aim for. Rather, Edwards notes that Bernarda ‘uses her stick to reinforce her words, her words are themselves like blows’<sup>96</sup> whilst Morris suggests that the protagonists ‘transform words into weapons’.<sup>97</sup> In Act One during the wake, one of the neighbours accuses Bernarda of having a ‘lengua de cuchillo’ (p. 316). Significantly, Lorca avoids the use of ‘como’ that would create a simile here, instead creating a stronger image through metaphor; Bernarda’s tongue is not like a knife, it is a knife.

The passion and violence of Bernarda’s speech also reveals the pervasive ‘colour’ of the play’s dialogue as a whole, especially in the discourse of María Josefa, Poncia, Adela, and Martirio. The ‘colour’ of the dialogue of *Bernarda Alba* can be interpreted on several levels: as referring to verbal colour and to speech which is metaphorically ‘colourful’ in the sense that it is passionate, metaphorical, colloquial, or vulgar. Poncia is an important character in this respect, not solely in her verbal colour, which is centred on material, quotidian peasant life – ‘chorizos’ (p. 309), ‘garbanzos’ (p. 309), ‘pan’ (p. 311), ‘uvas’ (p. 311), ‘tierra’ (p. 311), ‘lagarto machacado’ (p. 311), ‘lagartija’ (p. 342), ‘fuego’ (p. 344), ‘colorines’ (p. 348), ‘lentejuelas’ (p. 356), ‘ojos verdes’ (p. 356), ‘trigo’ (p. 356), ‘veneno’ (p.

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<sup>96</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 268.

<sup>97</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba*, p. 107.

393), ‘sangre’ (p. 393)<sup>98</sup> – but also in what Edwards suggests is her ‘normal, humorous, earthly and loquacious’ dialogue which is ‘colourful’ in the metaphorical sense.<sup>99</sup>

However, Adela’s, Martirio’s, and even Bernarda’s language can be seen as equally ‘colourful’. The passion, violence, and ‘colour’ of Adela’s dialogue – ‘mirando sus ojos me parece que bebo su sangre lentamente’ (p. 353), ‘he ido como arrastrada por una maroma’ (p. 374) – is ultimately matched by Martirio in the final act. Martirio’s apathy has given way to an unbearable jealousy, as shown by the change in her speech. Her ‘flat’ dialogue gradually becomes one of violence and ‘colour’, especially her exchanges with Adela in Act Three: ‘Déjame que el pecho se me rompa como una granada de amargura’ (p. 398) and ‘hubiera volcado un río de sangre sobre su cabeza’ (p. 402).<sup>100</sup> These powerful images of the explosive, staining capacity of colour offer Martirio a means of expressing her anger and emotional pain in terms of bodily wounding and violence, a theme which is central to my discussion of the dialogue of the Bride, the Mother, and Yerma in Chapter Three. Martirio’s verbal colour images reflect what Edwards suggests is the ‘unmitigated savagery’ and ‘cruelty’ of the characters in the play, in which they are reduced to an animal-like ferocity as indicated by María Josefa’s description of Bernarda as a leopard and Martirio as a hyena.<sup>101</sup> As María Josefa observes, the daughters are women ‘rabiando por la boda, haciéndose polvo el corazón’ (p. 339).<sup>102</sup> Poncia also refers to Martirio as a ‘pozo de veneno’ which Morris

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<sup>98</sup> ‘Chorizo, chickpeas, bread, grapes, earth, squashed lizard, little lizard, fire, sequins, green eyes, wheat, goldfinches, poison, blood’.

<sup>99</sup> Edwards argues that the varied, flexible nature of Poncia’s dialogue – which is more inhibited when she is with Bernarda – stands in contrast to that of the other characters, which ‘reflects their obsessions in its repeated patterns’, (*Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 271).

<sup>100</sup> ‘Let my chest burst open like a pomegranate of bitterness’, ‘I would have poured a river of blood over her head’. The violence of these images is compounded by the additional meaning of ‘granada’ as ‘grenade’. In Castilian, both these terms come from the Latin *granatum*, ‘having many seeds’. We see the pomegranate as a motif re-emerge in *Mariana Pineda* when her pale face is described as lacking the colours of pomegranate flowers, as I discuss in Chapter Three.

<sup>101</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 261 and p. 263.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Fiercely battling for a wedding, turning their hearts to dust’. Whilst ‘rabiando’ means a desperate longing or suffering for something, it also implies an uncontrollable violence and anger, like a rabid animal. These connotations are an important aspect of my discussion of the Shoemaker’s Wife’s ‘rabid green dress’ as the visual representation of her burning rage in *La zapatera prodigiosa* in Chapter Four.



sees as reflective of her 'dark thoughts' and 'disturbed psychology'.<sup>103</sup> Martirio's verbal colour captures the threat which her simmering rage and desperation poses to the material whitescape; when the pressures of the play finally reach their climax the white walls will not be left unharmed.

The 'colour' of Bernarda's discourse is the most unexpected and reflects the inner workings of her conflicted psyche. It creates a contradiction between the way she speaks and what she says, and undercuts the dominant monotone of the whitescape. Despite the white 'façade' Bernarda presents, her discourse reveals certain similarities with the other characters and suggests that she too suffers from an anxiety sparked by the material demands of the whitescape and perhaps a desire for an alternative. Verbal colour creeps into Bernarda's dialogue – 'limonada' (p. 315), 'hierbas' (p. 366 and p. 390), 'sangre' (p. 368)<sup>104</sup> – and Edwards has emphasised the linguistic similarity between Adela and Bernarda: 'of all the daughters' dialogue, it is Adela's that, in its force and vigour, is closest to Bernarda's'.<sup>105</sup> Unexpectedly, the verbal colour in Bernarda's language and gesture contradicts the stipulations of 'white' and 'flat' writing. Her discourse is full of exclamations, interrogatives, insults, and shouting, supported by the noise of her cane. For example, when the daughters fight after the theft of Pepe's photograph, Bernarda shouts: '*(Golpeando en el suelo.)* ¡No os hagáis ilusiones de que vais a poder conmigo. ¡Hasta que salga de esta casa con los pies adelante mandaré en lo mío y en lo vuestro!' (p. 338).<sup>106</sup> In contrast Barthes suggests that white writing 'takes place in the midst of all those exclamations and judgements without becoming involved in any of them; it consists precisely of their absence'.<sup>107</sup> Not only is Bernarda's dialogue full of Barthesian 'exclamations and judgements', but the play also has

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<sup>103</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba*, p. 54.

<sup>104</sup> 'Lemonade', 'grass', 'blood'.

<sup>105</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 270.

<sup>106</sup> (*Banging on the floor*) 'Don't get the idea that you can mess with me! Until I leave this house feet first I will be in charge of my business and yours!'

<sup>107</sup> Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, p. 83.

an oral and popular nature, what Morris calls its ‘pervasively colloquial texture’.<sup>108</sup> Bernarda’s ‘colourful’ language belies a more complicated relationship with colour, or at least reveals the strain and unnaturalness of her quest for chromatic extremes, a slippage exposed in her very speech. In his 2014 study *The Luminous and the Grey*, Batchelor looks back on the ideas explored in *Chromophobia*. He argues retrospectively that ‘it is only texts that might be called chromophobic or chromophilic, not people’ and recognises that ‘our relationship with colour is best described as ambivalent: most of us are both drawn to *and* repelled from colour’.<sup>109</sup> It is only in media such as film, literature and art where ‘we can step outside colour’; in real life ‘we can’t choose to be or not to be in colour’ as the failure of Bernarda’s whitescape has revealed.<sup>110</sup> Batchelor’s comments on the equivocation surrounding our feelings towards colour offer scope for understanding the conflation of chromophobia and the desire for colour in *Bernarda Alba* as these chromatic states are revealed to be overlapping rather than mutually exclusive. The ‘colour’ of the dialogue reveals the precarious authority of Bernarda’s whitescape and her deeply conflicted state of mind but also enhances the complexity of her portrayal and her role as a fully-developed character of bones-and-blood.

Far from being a passive symbol, colour in *Bernarda Alba* has the power to penetrate and affect the psyche, offering the audience a glimpse into the minds of the protagonists and capturing the reality of life inside the white cube in physical form. Bernarda’s visceral, violent reactions to colour reveal her chromophobia and the mental strain of maintaining her sterile white environment, a material whiteness which she conflates with morality and honour. The white walls reflect and exacerbate Bernarda’s conflicted mental state as Lorca

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<sup>108</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba*, p. 110. Morris highlights the addition of pronouns such as ‘me llegué a ver’ (Adela, p. 322) and ‘me estoy en mi sitio’ (Poncia, p. 390) and the addition or removal of definite articles as in ‘la Magdalena’ (Poncia, p. 308), ‘es buen hombre’ (Martirio, p. 332), and ‘tengo mal cuerpo,’ (Adela, p. 349), (*García Lorca: La casa de Bernarda Alba*, p. 111). ‘(Me) I went to see’, ‘(Me) I am in my place’, ‘Our Magdalena’, ‘He’s (a) good man’, ‘(My) body is bad.’

<sup>109</sup> David Batchelor, *The Luminous and the Grey* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), p. 13.

<sup>110</sup> Batchelor, *The Luminous and the Grey*, p. 13.

creates a claustrophobic, white dystopia which exposes her warped view of the world and her deteriorating mental state and which sparks horror and anxiety in the other characters. Hued colour becomes an aggressive, orgasmic force due to its scarcity, unsettling and moving the audience and Bernarda, when it does appear, and communicating and triggering Adela's erotic desire which is imbricated with her chromatic desire. The complex visual interplay between colour and whiteness is perpetuated at a textual level as the sparse whitescape is reflected in the pared-down dialogue and the 'colour' of Bernarda's discourse which undercuts the dominance of whiteness and reveals her conflicted state of mind and the complex overlapping nature of our feelings towards colour. Indeed, the dominance of the whitescape is frequently subverted and challenged by the core aesthetic image of the photographic documentary and by these explosive intrusions of hued colour. Through this equivocal representation of hued colour and whiteness, Lorca offers us a glimpse of the characters' private inner worlds and the intense suffering which lurks beneath the white façade. Rather than an abandonment of theatre of poetry, *Bernarda Alba* embodies these concerns, capturing complex and labile emotional states in the material colours of the staging and creating one of his most powerful examples of a wounding, instinctive, and pervasive poetry on the material stage.

### Chapter Three: Colour and Corporeality

In the preceding chapter, the question of how colour can be used to communicate character subjectivity and spark complex mental states emerged as central to a deep reading of colour in *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936). That in-depth study of a single play showed how material colour is a central part of Lorca's theatre of poetry, particularly the materialisation of abstract themes and emotions in the staging, the pursuit of the 'truth' of the protagonists' inner worlds, and the unsettling and invigoration of his audience. Taking forward those questions regarding colour in Lorca's theatre of poetry, I move now to widen the critical perspective and offer a reading of colour that ranges across the plays *El maleficio de la mariposa* (1920), *Mariana Pineda* (1925), *Amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (1925), *El público* (1930), *Así que pasen cinco años* (1931), *Bodas de sangre* (1932), and *Yerma* (1934). Through an analysis of the trope of female bodily whiteness, the expression of female pain in somatic terms, and the piercing of the male body, Chapter Three focuses on the ways in which Lorca uses bodily colour to 'make poetry human', to create characters of bones-and-blood, and to move towards a more fluid representation of gender.

White is not merely an important material and psychological force in *Bernarda Alba*; it is also part of how Lorca depicts the female body throughout his theatre, particularly in *El maleficio*, *Mariana Pineda*, *Don Perlimplín*, and *Bodas de sangre*. At one level, Lorca's portrayal of the white female body focuses on three key aspects: the virginal (the Bride), the dying (the Butterfly and Mariana), and the erotic (Belisa). The correlation of femininity and whiteness is a perennial Western trope, particularly the associations between white, beauty, and characteristics such as grace, modesty, and kindness. The 'shining beauty and goodness of the heroine' is a core tenet of fairy tales and myth, as explored by Marina Warner in *From the Beast to the Blonde* (1994). Warner notes that the Old English usage of 'fair' as a

synonym of beautiful segued into ‘unblemished’ by the thirteenth century and ‘light in colour’ by the sixteenth century, condensing these values.<sup>1</sup> Dyer also suggests that virginity and morality were thought to manifest themselves physically in whiteness: ‘the cult of virginity expressed an idea of unsullied femininity [...] which was held to be visible in a woman’s appearance’, a parallel which is reminiscent of the strong relationship between the cleanliness of the white house and morality and honour in *Bernarda Alba* as I explored in Chapter Two.<sup>2</sup> This conflation of the symbolic values of virginity with the Bride’s body in *Bodas de sangre* is indicative of what Dyer, in his study of whiteness in Western culture, calls ‘the slippage between white as hue, skin and symbol’.<sup>3</sup> Whilst the Bride’s skin is not literally white, Lorca uses her clothing and the repeated description of her as ‘blanca’ to reflect the central poetic themes of purity and honour in the staging and the dialogue of the play in ways which are mutually enhancing. The visual whiteness of her orange-blossom crown, petticoats, and bodice in the stage directions is coupled with verbal references to whiteness and to virginity in the wedding morning song: ‘la blanca novia’, (p. 357), ‘blanca doncella’ (p. 361), and ‘blanca niña’ (p. 362).<sup>4</sup> As I discuss later in this Chapter and in my analysis of object colour in Chapter Four, Lorca’s theatre of poetry is most successful when speech is supported by visual representations due to the ephemeral and predominantly visual nature of live performance. The Bride’s purity and corporeal whiteness are further intertwined in the final scene when she defends her virginity by claiming that ‘ningún hombre se haya mirado en la blancura de mis pechos’ (p. 409).<sup>5</sup> The symbolic values of purity are

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<sup>1</sup> Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde* (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 381 and p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> Dyer, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Dyer, p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> ‘White bride’, ‘white maid’, ‘white girl’. Lorca’s use of ‘Bride’, ‘doncella’, and ‘niña’ are all female roles which imply sexual innocence. ‘Doncella’ is used in literary contexts to mean ‘maid’ in the virginal sense, or ‘damsel’, drawing again on the traditional fairy-tale relation of fairness and virginity. Ortiz’s re-imagining of the play contrasts the actress Inma Cuesta’s dark natural colouring with her white clothing. She takes Lorca’s description of the Bride’s white underwear on her wedding morning and extends it to at least one element of her clothing throughout the film: her nightdress, underwear, petticoats, shirt and, in contradistinction to the original play, her wedding dress.

<sup>5</sup> ‘No man has looked upon the whiteness of my breasts’.

transferred to her body; the whiteness of her breasts is evidence of her sexual untouchedness. Like the white walls in *Bernarda Alba*, pure and unmarked material whiteness in *Bodas de sangre* is indicative of honour and the absence of sin.

White as absence – in particular, the absence of blood – is also reminiscent of death and the initial pallor of the corpse. In *El maleficio* and *Mariana Pineda*, Lorca uses the associations between whiteness and death to communicate the physical decline of the Butterfly and of Mariana in material and symbolic terms. Throughout *El maleficio* the Butterfly's body is fading, leaving the material world: 'la Muerte me dio dos alas blancas' (p. 82).<sup>6</sup> The Butterfly's fairy-tale fairness is emphasised by the multiple references to the material whiteness of her body, and by the syntax of 'la blanca durmiente' (p. 81) which echoes 'la bella durmiente'.<sup>7</sup> This second image foreshadows a deathly sleep in which the white body remains perfectly preserved, like Sleeping Beauty or Snow White. The Butterfly's white wings are described in erotic terms as both 'blanquísima seda' (p. 71) and 'blancas como el armiño' (p. 74), evoking a luxurious haptic experience through these expensive white fabrics. These metaphors remind us of the sensual values of whiteness which we find in Lorca's descriptions of Mariana's white neck in *Mariana Pineda* and of Belisa's nude white body in *Don Perlimplín*, as I discuss later in this chapter.<sup>8</sup> From her first appearance, the Butterfly's body achieves the literal hue whiteness which cannot normally be encapsulated in human skin, except in the rare genetic form of albinism, and stands in stark contrast to the

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<sup>6</sup> 'Death gave me two white wings'.

<sup>7</sup> 'Sleeping white one'.

<sup>8</sup> 'Whitest silk', 'as white as ermine'.

shiny black bodies of the other beetle characters.<sup>9</sup> Whilst the dying Butterfly is white from the beginning of the play in *El maleficio*, in *Mariana Pineda* we find Mariana's physical depletion depicted in the gradual fading of her body and her costume, which communicates the mobile and equivocal nature of material colour in Lorca's theatre of poetry. In his 2007 study, McDermid probes the symbolic ramifications of Mariana's corporeal fading and suggests that her increasing whiteness signals 'a movement from the substantial to the ethereal' which is indicative of the 'absence of the physical' and 'the white of the void', reminding us how the material and the symbolic are inextricably linked.<sup>10</sup> Whilst Mariana's skin is not literally white, as with the Bride in *Bodas de sangre* Lorca uses the characters' dialogue to refer repeatedly to her growing paleness, which is then supported further by her white costume in Act Three. Throughout the play Mariana's costume changes from '*malva claro*' (Act One, p. 106) to '*amarillo claro, un amarillo de libro viejo*' (Act Two, p. 143) to '*un espléndido traje blanco*' (Act Three, p. 185).<sup>11</sup> The move from mauve to yellow to white in Mariana's clothing also mimics the healing of a bruise, another form of the gradual depletion of blood. I explore the significance of her costumes in relation to the central poetic images of the play in Chapter Four. Angustias's and Clavela's descriptions of Mariana in the first Act are an early indication of her corporeal fading, a process which has already begun when the play commences: 'Se le ha puesto la sonrisa casi blanca, como vieja flor abierta en un encaje', (p. 103) and 'aquellos colores de flor de granado desaparecieron de su cara', (p.

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<sup>9</sup> In the play's premiere the Butterfly's costume consisted of a silk dress and shawl and a hood with curved antennae. A photograph of the original costumes is replicated at <<https://www.moonmagazine.info/lorca-el-maleficio-de-la-mariposa-trece-gatos/>> [accessed 11 September 2019]. Subsequent productions have continued to experiment with more anti-mimetic and insect-like ensembles. For example, in Mario Jaime and Yadiro Trejo's 2011 staging with the theatre group Cassandra Maledictio (Centro Cultura de la Paz, Baja California, Mexico), the Butterfly wore a white body suit and hood with long antennae; white, black, and bronze contoured make-up; and elaborate white silk wings painted with red and green patterns like real butterfly wings, which the actress controlled with sticks. See a recording of her monologue at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t19Eob1J9L0>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

<sup>10</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> 'Pale mauve', 'pale yellow, a yellow of old books', 'a splendid white dress'. The 'old-book-yellow' of Mariana's dress also has olfactory values.

125).<sup>12</sup> The transformative verb ‘ponerse’ emphasises the ongoing process of this whitening or bleaching, whilst the two floral metaphors remind us of other processes in which hued colour and vitality are gradually depleted.<sup>13</sup> The repeated references to Mariana’s bodily whiteness from the beginning of the play suggest that Mariana is dying from the start. By Act Three, her living body has become shrouded in her white clothes: ‘Ella me parece *amortajada* cuando cruza el coro bajo con esa ropa tan blanca’, (p. 201).<sup>14</sup> Lorca’s use of the superlative ‘*palidísima*’ (p. 185) to describe Mariana’s white body in the final act is suggestive of a transformation which has reached its final stage.<sup>15</sup> Whilst the material whiteness of the Butterfly and Mariana is indicative of death, it is also reminiscent of the ‘sublime pallor’ of the dying tubercular heroine in nineteenth-century literature and ‘the beauty of white death as well as the romantic longing for it’.<sup>16</sup> The more abject representation of white and death which we find in *Bernarda Alba* – white as terrifying and pathological – is absent in these portrayals. Rather, white is a meliorative force with positive aesthetic values of beauty, as opposed to the visual representation of, and cause of, mental trauma in *Bernarda Alba*. I will compare these romanticised depictions of white female beauty with the pallor of the Young Man in *Así que pasen* and the theme of exsanguination in my discussion of the piercing of the male body and the consequent spilling of blood and redness later in this chapter.

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Her smile has turned almost white, like an ageing lacework flower’, ‘those pomegranate-flower colours have disappeared from your face’. These references to pomegranate are an unusual and important choice given the mythical and etymological links between the fruit and Granada, Lorca’s birth place, reminding us of the setting of both *Mariana Pineda* and *Doña Rosita*. We saw the dual-meaning of ‘granada’ as pomegranate and grenade arise in Martirio’s violent, colourful dialogue in my discussion of *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two.

<sup>13</sup> These two representations of floral fading also evoke the core poetic motif of the mutable rose in *Doña Rosita*, as I explore in my discussion of object colour and theatre of poetry in Chapter Four. Rosita’s costumes fade from pink, to pale pink, to white throughout the course of the play in line with her growing age and hopelessness.

<sup>14</sup> ‘She looks like she is in a shroud when she crosses the choir in such white clothes’. My emphasis.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Extremely pale’.

<sup>16</sup> Dyer, p. 209.



Lorca's portrayal of Belisa in *Don Perlimplín* reveals another facet of white female beauty: the erotic and the sensual. Wright sees Belisa as a depiction of surface femininity, a masquerade which may not reveal anything beneath.<sup>17</sup> McDermid builds on this interpretation, suggesting that the whiteness of Belisa's body is indicative of a spiritual lack; she is an 'empty shell', a purely carnal form which will be transformed by Perlimplín's 'self-sacrifice'.<sup>18</sup> There are potential symbolic readings of Belisa's white body, but the sensory and the material can be seen as equally central to her 'whiteness'. Whilst the exotic 'foreign' female body or woman of colour is the most common erotic trope, Warner also draws our attention to the motif of the sensual blonde woman in Western literary and visual culture, particularly in representations of the goddess of love in Homer, in Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1486), and in the illustrations of the D'Este family's fifteenth-century treatise on astronomy, *On the Sphere of the World*, inter alia.<sup>19</sup> These erotic values of Western feminine whiteness are already present in Lorca's earlier plays: the tactile values of the Butterfly's white ermine and silk body are markedly sensual, as is the portrayal of Mariana's white neck in *Mariana Pineda*, which Pedrosa desires and covets, reminding us that there is also a material and sensual aspect to their 'white' bodies. In *Don Perlimplín*, the erotic white body becomes the central site of female beauty in the play, particularly in the display of Belisa's body; she is often semi-nude or has bare arms. In the prologue Belisa is described as 'blanca' (p. 266) and compared to lilies and white sugar by her mother: 'Es una azucena [...]' (*Bajando la voz*). ¡Pues si la viese por dentro!... Como de azúcar' (p. 269).<sup>20</sup> The repeated

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<sup>17</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 53.

<sup>18</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Warner, p. 363. The trope of the sexualised and erotic body of 'foreign' women or women of colour is a more common theme. Stephen Garton comments on how 'the Orient, the empire, "exotic races" and other tropes functioned within nineteenth-century Western culture to signify sexuality [...] Idealised representations of otherness were saturated in sexual metaphors of allure, domination, temptation, luxury, voluptuousness, and death. These images depicted the East as a place of erotic fantasy and fulfilment, cementing the image of the Orient as a feminized and sexualized world, completely other to the chaste domestic world of European middle-class maternalism', *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 131.

<sup>20</sup> 'White', 'she is a lily [...]' (*Lowering her voice*.) If you could see her on the inside! Like sugar...

image of white sugar appeals to our haptic and gustatory senses, blending the visual values of colour with the non-visual senses of touch and taste. The fact that the Mother lowers her voice also suggests that ‘por dentro’ is a sexual reference, enhancing the eroticism of the scene. The ‘azucena’ – the white lily – is heavily fragranced and has thick sticky petals, stressing the sexual overtones of the scene. This sensual portrayal of whiteness is particularly evident in the bathing scene in the song in Act Three:

Por las orillas del río

se está la noche mojando [...]

Y en los pechos de Belisa

se mueren de amor los ramos [...]

La noche canta desnuda

sobre los puentes de marzo [...]

Belisa lava su cuerpo

con agua salobre y nardos [...]

La noche de anís y plata

relumbra por los tejados [...]

Plata de arroyos y espejos

y anís de tus muslos blancos [...] (pp. 297–98).<sup>21</sup>

In Belisa’s song, the night itself is anthropomorphised and eroticised; it is damp and naked, aniseed-scented (or white like aniseed flowers) and shining silver. Belisa refers to her own body in the third person as if she were a voyeur, describing her breasts and her washing of

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<sup>21</sup> BELISA (*Inside, singing.*) ‘By the shores of the river the night is growing damp [...] And on Belisa’s breasts the branches die of love [...] The night sings naked over the March bridges [...] Belisa washes her body with salt water and tuberose flowers [...] The aniseed and silver night shines over the roof tops [...] Silver of streams and mirrors and aniseed of your white thighs [...]’.

her body in salt water and tuberose flowers, both of which are implicitly associated with white.<sup>22</sup> These sensually-charged motifs of whiteness are continued in the image of white, aniseed thighs (referring both to her lover and herself when the ‘voices’ repeat the refrain), an area of the white body whose proximity to the sexual organs is usually hidden by clothes. The voluptuous portrayal of female whiteness offers a counter-image to the white body as virginal and self-contained, depicting a different kind of white bodily beauty centred on the sensual and erotic rather than on traditional symbolic assumptions of ‘whiteness’.

Lorca’s multi-faceted portrayal of female bodily whiteness reveals that there is no static depiction of colour, even a single colour, in Lorca’s work. In his theatre of poetry he is constantly experimenting and engaging with the equivocal affective and material possibilities of the chromatic. Whilst there are important symbolic aspects to these portrayals, Lorca also problematizes these ‘white’ representations of femininity. First, as Dyer observes, symbolic or racial whiteness does not equal hue whiteness.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the bodily ‘whiteness’ of Lorca’s women can be read as largely figurative, a property of the dialogue and costume rather than of the visual reality of the material body. Furthermore, these women are Hispanic and thus likely to have darker colouring. For example, the wedding-morning song in Act Two of *Bodas de sangre* paradoxically reveals the Bride’s brownness as she is described as ‘morena’ and ‘morenita’ (p. 357).<sup>24</sup> In the final scene, the Bride is also covered in blood, her hair and

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<sup>22</sup> The ‘nardo’ or tuberose flower is a recurring motif in Lorca’s work, as found in his portrayal of Mariana’s white neck in *Mariana Pineda*. There is a long-standing tradition of associating tuberose perfume with sexuality and the body. In her 2017 study on perfume in Victorian literature, Catherine Maxwell refers to tuberose as a ‘carnal’ flower associated with both the dead body and the erotic body, *Scents and Sensibility: Perfume in Victorian Literary Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 183. Exploring the motif of the tuberose flower in the work of Victorian poets Mark André Raffalovich, Mary Robinson, and Theodore Wratislaw, Maxwell suggests that ‘the scent of the tuberose is bound up with dangerous or voluptuous pleasures, with love, eroticism, criminality, and death’, (p. 13).

<sup>23</sup> Dyer, p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Morena’ is used to signify dark hair and/or tanned or olive skin. In *La novia* Ortiz casts Inma Cuesta as the Bride and deliberately contrasts her dark hair, eyes and skin with the fair colouring of other characters, including the First Girl, Second Girl, and the Wife and her baby son, all of whom are also Hispanic. The differences between the bodily colouring of the Bride and that of the Wife and her child are even more striking given their genetic relationship as cousins, and the dark colouring of the baby’s father, Leonardo. In fact, it is in Leonardo’s body that we find the closest chromatic mirroring of the Bride’s, a visual suggestion of their compatibility.

black dress sticky with congealing redness even as she refers to the ‘whiteness’ of her breasts: ‘*aparece teñida en sangre falda y cabellera*’ (p. 407).<sup>25</sup> Lorca’s use of the verb ‘teñir’, ‘to dye’, also implies not only colour as a process but a permanent change in colouring which represents the poetic theme of the staining of honour in the dialogue in physical form, like the blue tinted walls in *Bernarda Alba*. The Bride has now become a sullied form of the ‘golden flower’ which she is described as in the wedding-morning song: ‘*sobre la flor de oro, sucia arena*’ (p. 407). This is a brown female body ‘dyed’ with blood, representing a strong contrast with the symbolic portrayals of whiteness.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, these representations of ‘white’ women are more complex than they first appear and ‘whiteness’ is only one aspect of their portrayal. The ‘slippage’ that Dyer identifies between symbolic and material readings of whiteness in his discussion of Western visual culture is one possible reading of these plays, yet Lorca is also employing bodily colour in other, more complex ways.

Lorca’s exploration of the colouration of the female body is not limited to symbolic values of purity, innocence, and beauty but also forms part of his expression of character subjectivity in his creation of an emotive, ‘human’ theatre of poetry. White is only one aspect of Lorca’s portrayal of the Bride’s bodily colour; she is also described in brown terms, and other bodily colours – such as red, yellow, and black – are imprinted upon her either literally (blood), or figuratively in her dialogue (through images of bruising, burns, sores, ulcers, and

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<sup>25</sup> ‘Her hair and skirts dyed with blood’. Whilst the black wedding gown might seem ominous or funereal, Morris reminds us that it was an old Galician tradition, (*García Lorca: Bodas de sangre*, p. 54). This may stem from the Spanish Roman Catholic tradition within which the black wedding dress symbolised their dedication to that marriage until death. Rather than red-on-black, Paula Ortiz’s and Carlos Saura’s film versions of the play use a white dress for a greater visual impact, perhaps also playing into contemporary Western expectations of wedding dresses as white.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Dirty sand on the golden flower’. In *La novia*, Ortiz begins with this crucial final scene before moving back to the preceding events. Her version opens with the Bride lying corpse-like in grey clay against a white desertscape, her white clothing stained with blood and her head shrouded in white cloth. Her body is suffering: she struggles to her feet in the slippery grey clay, groaning with pain and clutching her abdomen, her lips dry and cracked. Her natural bodily colour is stained with dust, clay and blood, a more literal interpretation of this poetic image.

rotting). The Bride's powerful description of her emotional pain in bodily terms fills the text with corporeal colours that metaphorically stain and mark her 'white' body. The colours which these images induce are also deeply rooted in her experience of bodily pain, suggesting that verbal colour offers a glimpse of her felt experience. This discourse is part of Lorca's concern with creating a theatre of poetry which explores the pain of daily life and furthers my discussion of colour as a means of communicating complex character subjectivities in *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two. Many critics have viewed Lorca's protagonists as universal 'everyman' characters, particularly in *Bodas de sangre* where all the characters except Leonardo have generic names and where many of the protagonists are defined by their social relations to each other, roles centred on marriage and procreation ('father', 'mother', 'bride', 'groom', 'wife', 'mother-in-law'). For example, Smith argues that it 'would seem vain to offer personalised psychological readings of characters who within the play itself are denoted only according to their familial function'.<sup>27</sup> However, a reading of any of Lorca's protagonists as generic ciphers undercuts their depth and the affective impact of these portrayals, particularly as he aims to create human characters of bones-and-blood and expose the hidden pain of ordinary, everyday existence. Their pain may be timeless and universal, but these protagonists are still complex emotional individuals in their own right, as shown by Lorca's portrayal of their internal realities. The Bride is not a two-dimensional character but one who expresses complex and competing desires and whose suffering is figuratively imprinted on her body in highly chromatic and intersensory ways. Morris observes that she 'can explain her feelings only in images and sensations', creating an allegorical discourse of her conflicted state of mind.<sup>28</sup> One of the most potent examples of the Bride's expression of her emotional pain in bodily terms is in Act Three, Scene Two, in the final moments of the play:

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<sup>27</sup> See Smith, *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>28</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: Bodas de sangre*, p. 36.

NOVIA [...] Yo era una mujer quemada, llena de llagas por dentro y por fuera, y tu hijo era un poquito de agua de la que yo esperaba hijos, tierra, salud; pero el otro era un río oscuro, lleno de ramas, que acercaba a mí el rumor de sus juncos y su cantar entre dientes. Y yo corría con tu hijo que era como un niño de agua, frío, y el otro me mandaba cientos de pájaros que me impedían el andar y que dejaban escarcha sobre mis heridas de pobre mujer marchita, de muchacha acariciada por el fuego. Yo no quería, ¡óyelo bien!; yo no quería, ¡óyelo bien! Yo no quería. ¡Tu hijo era mi fin y yo no lo he engañado, pero el brazo del otro me arrastró como un golpe de mar, como la cabezada de un mulo, y me hubiera arrastrado siempre, siempre, siempre, siempre, aunque hubiera sido vieja y todos los hijos de tu hijo me hubiesen agarrado de los cabellos! (pp. 409–10).<sup>29</sup>

The Bride portrays her suffering body in terms of the effects of burns, sores, ulcers, drowning, and being dragged, adding to the motif of rotting in Act Two, Scene One: ‘tengo el pecho podrido de aguantar’ (p. 355).<sup>30</sup> Depictions of fire and burning – ‘quemada’ and ‘acariciada por fuego’ – create powerful images of a body blackened by soot and flames and reddened by burns. This is not merely physical desire for the Bride but the searing pain of dishonour and grief. Paradoxically, Lorca’s use of ‘acariciar’ suggests an initial tenderness, such as a lover’s caress, which has ultimately burnt her, as he communicates an intricate blending of pleasure and pain. Her relationships with both men involve a search for relief

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<sup>29</sup> BRIDE ‘I was a burnt woman, full of sores inside and out, and your son was a little bit of water with which I hoped for children, land, and health; but the other one was a dark river, full of branches, which brought me the murmur of his reeds and the song between his teeth. And I ran with your son, who was a little child of cold water, and the other one sent hundreds of birds which blocked my path and left frost on my poor withered woman wounds, my wounds of a young woman caressed by fire. And I did not want to! Listen! I did not want to. Your son was my destiny and I have not deceived him, but the arm of the other one dragged me like a booming wave, like the butt of a mule, and he would have dragged me forever, forever, forever, even if I were old and all of your son’s children had held me down by my hair’. These images of burning and dragging remind us of Adela’s expression of her physical desire in terms of fire and of Amelia’s warning that Bernarda will drag Adela by her hair if she catches her in the green dress in *Bernarda Alba*, as I explored in Chapter Two. Likewise, the metaphor of ulcers recurs in Yerma’s dialogue in my discussion of *Yerma* later in this chapter. These violent images offer a powerful portrayal of these female characters’ personal pain and of the brutality with which they treat each other, especially in *Bernarda Alba*.

<sup>30</sup> ‘My chest is rotten from endurance’.

from this burning: ‘un poquito de agua’ (Groom) and ‘escarcha’ (Leonardo) respectively. Her body is ‘llena de llagas por dentro y por fuera’, evoking sores which are white, red, and even yellow. The Bride’s suffering is also conveyed in terms of bodily struggle against the currents of the ‘río oscuro’, the ‘cientos de pájaros’ which block her path, and ‘un golpe del mar’, all of which would leave her body bruised, scratched, and half-drowned. The repeated metaphor of being dragged, including by her hair, creates mental images of bruises and grazes, of chunks of hair pulled out by the roots, and of bloodied patches of scalp. The violence and colour of the Bride’s discourse is emphasised further through images which metaphorically pierce her body, creating a figurative counterpart to the stabbing of the male body that I explore later in this chapter. The Bride’s search for punishment has become conflated with the need for her body to mirror her emotional pain, a powerful and visceral portrayal of the suffering female body which has a lingering affective impact on the audience. She demands death twice in the final Act of the play. First, in Act Three, Scene One when she has eloped with Leonardo, she combines the motif of burning with references to shooting and to shards of glass: ‘Si no quieres matarme [...] pon en mis manos de novia el cañón de la escopeta. ¡Ay, qué lamento, qué fuego me sube por la cabeza! ¡Qué vidrios se me clavan en la lengua! (p. 397).<sup>31</sup> The metaphor of glass piercing her tongue is particularly powerful both as an image of extreme pain and as an assault on the organ of speech and taste, and on discursive agency.<sup>32</sup> The shards of glass are an extension of the knife motif which is threaded throughout the play and which keeps the vulnerability of the body centre stage. Secondly, the Bride asks her mother-in-law to kill her at the end of the play after Leonardo and the Groom have stabbed each other to death: ‘pero no con las manos; con garfios de alambre, con una

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<sup>31</sup> ‘If you don’t want to kill me [...] put the barrel of a shotgun in my bridal hands. Oh, what regret, what fire rises through my head! What shards of glass pierce my tongue!’

<sup>32</sup> In Ortiz’s adaptation, glass becomes a central motif and twice the Bride coughs up pieces of bloodied glass in a visual representation of the metaphorical glass-pierced tongue.

hoz, y con fuerza, hasta que se rompa en mis huesos' (p. 409).<sup>33</sup> The figurative piercing of the body continues in this image of wire, sickle, and broken bones, breaching the body's surface and exposing the implicit colour underneath in ways evocative of the journeying through the body which I discuss in *El público* later in this chapter. These images suggest an intensely chromatic 'output' of suffering which is written upon the female body.

The violence and colour of the Bride's discourse is reflected in the dialogue of the Mother. Morris sees the Mother as a 'disturbing character', suggesting that Lorca 'depicts scars left on her mind by grief' as she 'keep[s] alive the hatreds of the past'.<sup>34</sup> Speech is the sole expression of a simmering rage which she cannot act upon due to the restrictions of her gender and of 'civilized' society. In Act One, Scene One, the depth of her fermenting hatred towards the Félix clan – Leonardo's family and the opposing side of the blood feud which resulted in the deaths of her husband and her elder son – is already clear. She tells the Groom, her remaining son, that she cannot move to his new property with the Bride as the Félix family might try to bury their relatives in the graveyard where her husband and son are buried: '¡Y eso sí que no! ¡Ca! ¡Eso sí que no! Porque con las uñas los desentierro y yo sola los machaco contra la tapia' (p. 314).<sup>35</sup> This is a particularly disturbing image of violence in which the sacred rite of burial and respect for the dead body are both overturned. In the same scene, she tells her neighbour that: 'Pero oigo eso de Félix y es lo mismo (*entre dientes*) Félix que llenárseme de cieno la boca (*escupe*), y tengo que escupir, tengo que escupir por no matar (p. 320)'.<sup>36</sup> The vitriol of this image is emphasised by the stage directions, where the actress speaks through gritted teeth and spits on the floor. The haptic quality of mud is central to both

<sup>33</sup> 'But not with your hands; with wire hooks, with a sickle, and with force, until it breaks against my bones'.

<sup>34</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: Bodas de sangre*, p. 40 and p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> 'Over my dead body! Because with my fingernails I would dig them back up and on my own I would crush them against the wall'.

<sup>36</sup> 'But when I hear the name "Félix" it is the same (*between gritted teeth*) "Félix" which fills my mouth with slime (*spits*) and I have to spit, I have to spit so I do not kill'. 'Cieno' is a particular quality of mud: silt, slime, or mire, which reminds us of Bernarda's description of village gossip in *Bernarda Alba*: 'Hay a veces una ola de fango que levantan los demás para perdernos' (p. 372). 'Sometimes there is a wave of mud sent by others to engulf us'.



of these images; it is stuck under the fingernails of the metaphorical gravedigger and it fills the Mother's mouth and browns her spit. These lines also reveal a barely repressed desire for violence, particularly in the image of unearthed dead bodies crushed against a wall and spilling their bodily fluids with their lurid output of colour. Much of the Mother's dialogue involves containing her violent impulses: she spits 'por no matar' in the first scene and, in the final scene, she pretends not to recognise the Bride 'para no clavarla mis dientes en el cuello' (p. 409), a cannibalistic image of white teeth and the red blood of the torn jugular.<sup>37</sup> Despite the Mother's animosity towards the Bride, they are paradoxically linked by their embodied emotional pain. There is a significant parallel found in 'tengo el pecho podrido de aguantar' (the Bride) and 'tengo en el pecho un grito siempre' (the Mother, p. 367), especially in the grammatical mirroring of 'tengo' and 'pecho'.<sup>38</sup> Throughout *Bodas de sangre* Lorca uses corporeal colour and metaphors of violence against the body to capture the agonizing suffering of the Bride and the Mother. This is a pain which goes very deep: 'me duele hasta la punta de las venas' (the Mother, p. 367).<sup>39</sup> This is a turmoil which is left unresolved as the men lie dead but the women live on to cry alone inside their dark houses, isolated even from each other, like Bernarda's daughters in *Bernarda Alba*.<sup>40</sup> The play ends with the Mother's reference to 'la oscura raíz del grito' (p. 413) which will torment these women forever, trapped by a fate worse than death.<sup>41</sup>

The terrible unrelenting pain of the Bride's and the Mother's discourse and Lorca's aim of expressing the desperate reality of his human characters continue in *Yerma*. Like the Bride's and the Mother's suffering, the pain of Yerma's infertility penetrates on a deep bodily level; it is in her flesh and her bones. She tells her husband Juan that 'lo que sufro lo guardo

<sup>37</sup> 'So I do not sink my teeth into her neck'.

<sup>38</sup> 'I have an eternal cry in my chest'.

<sup>39</sup> 'It hurts in the very tips of my veins'.

<sup>40</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 155.

<sup>41</sup> 'The dark root of a scream'. Lorca's use of 'raíz' here reminds us of Rosita's conflation of floral and human bodies in her dialogue in *Doña Rosita*. This metaphor also implies depth, enhancing the images of a suffering which has penetrated the very veins of the Mother's body.

pegado a mis carnes' (p. 488) and that the bitterness he complains of is entrenched 'en los huesos' (p. 492).<sup>42</sup> Like the Bride, Yerma resorts to images of ulcers to communicate the agony of her infertility when she tells the Old Woman 'has puesto el dedo en la llaga más honda que tienen mis carnes' (p. 474), an image which not only conveys images of yellow, white, and red sores, but of being deep inside her flesh.<sup>43</sup> Yerma's dialogue and expression of pain are rooted in the somatic and what Smith calls the 'speaking of and in the woman's body', a reading which also sheds light on the Bride's and the Mother's discourse.<sup>44</sup> However, Yerma's speech does not solely draw on images of bodily wounding as the expression of her suffering. Rather, the source of her pain, her infertility, is woven through the dialogue through the motifs of blood (redness) and milk (whiteness), part of what Smith refers to as Lorca's 'frequent appeal to lyrical and often liquid imagery drawn from the natural or organic worlds (to streams and clouds, to blood and milk)'.<sup>45</sup> These motifs draw attention to the central role of Lorca's implicit colour and object colour in his theatre of poetry, which I explore in my discussion of material colour in Chapter Four. In his 2003 study of the place of skin in Western culture, Steven Connor captures these tactile properties in his definition of implicit object colour:

Colour [...] mingles with an object or substance, imparting its tincture to it, and receiving back the object's impress. The coloured object – gold, milk, sky, blood – gives rise to what we might call an object-colour, a colour with its own phantasmal form, texture and density.<sup>46</sup>

Blood and milk conjure up redness and whiteness and those substances invest colour with viscose or fluid properties; the visual qualities of colour become intertwined with its 'texture'

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<sup>42</sup> 'I keep what I suffer from close to my flesh', 'in my bones'.

<sup>43</sup> 'You have put your finger in the deepest sore in my flesh'.

<sup>44</sup> Smith, *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, p. 16.

<sup>46</sup> Steven Connor, *The Book of Skin* (New York: Reaktion Books, 2003), pp. 148–49.

and ‘density’, and colour and object become permanently fused. Reading for these implicit colours in *Yerma* and *Bodas de sangre* highlights the material and intersensory nature of Lorca's colour-work and captures the pain of Yerma's denied maternity in its cruel repetition of maternal colour, creating a discourse of chromatic materiality. Unlike the spilled male blood which pervades Lorca's theatre, as I discuss later in the chapter, these representations of whiteness and redness are positive, creative chromatic forces which Yerma's body is denied. Through his exploration of these implicitly-coloured bodily fluids, Lorca conveys the depth of the suffering hidden beneath and caused by Yerma's flesh in terms of the internal colours of the body, capturing a uniquely feminine portrayal of pain. Whilst Yerma has been read as an intersexual type by Smith and as the masculine counterpart to her effeminate husband by McDermid, *Yerma* is deeply rooted in what it means to be a woman and is centred on the primal and painful forces of maternity.<sup>47</sup>

Despite his reading of bisexuality in *Yerma*, Smith still suggests that the play as a whole is explicitly focused on the female body and its reproductive functions.<sup>48</sup> Victor García's and Fabiá Puigserver's controversial 1971 adaptation of this play placed the audience inside Yerma's body in a womb-like trampoline set which Delgado proposes mimicked ‘the stretchable tissue of the womb, serving as a visual metaphor for Yerma's childlessness’.<sup>49</sup> In a similar evocation of the female body, Helen Kaut-Howson's 2006 production at London's Arcola Theatre contrasted a white set with ‘a central vulva-shaped pool surrounded by rocks’ as reviewer Sam Marlowe tells us.<sup>50</sup> The references to the womb and vulva in these productions, the opening of the body to reveal colour, offers a different portrayal of corporeal colour to that of the stabbed and perforated male characters in Lorca's

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<sup>47</sup> See McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 156–61.

<sup>48</sup> Smith, *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> Sam Marlowe, ‘Yerma at Arcola Theatre’, *The Times*, 30 August 2006 <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/yerma-9cdvdkbbvqs>> [accessed 11 September 2019]. Marlowe suggests that the set, designed by Lilja Blumenfeld, is as ‘bleakly unyielding’ as Yerma's terrible fate.

plays. Rather than the reds of death, this portrayal of blood indicates a blossoming which complements the metaphors of children as flowers and the fertile body as the earth. The emotional pain metaphorically written on Yerma's flesh and bones stands in contrast to the blood and the bodily suffering created by pregnancy, childbirth and nursing, which are to be embraced:

YERMA ¡Bah! Yo he visto a mi hermana dar de mamar a su niño con el pecho lleno de grietas y le producía un gran dolor, pero era un dolor fresco, bueno, necesario para la salud [...] Tener un hijo no es tener un ramo de rosas. Hemos de sufrir para verlos crecer. Yo pienso que se nos va la mitad de nuestra sangre. Pero esto es bueno, sano, hermoso' (p. 427).<sup>51</sup>

There is a sacrificial tone to this offering of 'la mitad de nuestra sangre' but, in the natural context of childbirth, Yerma reads the redness of ulcerated breasts and blood as desirable and 'sano', revealing her desperate desire for motherhood at any cost in Lorca's de-idealised vision of maternity. This is the blood of birth rather than death and a pain of which Yerma is unafraid, in contrast to other women in the play who have sought Dolores's help. Yerma wants a child to bloom inside her 'aunque tenga mil espinas' (p. 484) and will do almost anything to conceive: 'aunque me mande clavarme agujas en el sitio más débil de mis ojos' (p. 433).<sup>52</sup> However, blood can also be a constraining force and the antithesis of maternity. In Act Two, Scene Two she cries: 'Ay qué dolor de sangre prisionera me está clavando avispa en la nuca!' (p. 461).<sup>53</sup> Her reference to 'sangre prisionera' reveals that, for Yerma, blood has a different meaning to that of motherhood and childbirth. Instead, it represents the agony of her hope and her taunting by the continuing menstrual cycle. Blood becomes part of the

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<sup>51</sup> YERMA 'Rubbish! I've seen my sister breastfeed her baby with a chapped breast and it was very painful, but it was a fresh, good, healthy pain [...] Having a child isn't a bed of roses. We have to suffer to see them grow. I think they take half of our blood. But it is good, healthy, beautiful'.

<sup>52</sup> 'Even if it has a thousand thorns', even if you tell me to stab needles in the weakest part of my eyes'.

<sup>53</sup> 'Oh, what pain of imprisoning blood is stabbing my neck with wasps!'

pervasive feeling of imprisonment which Andrew Anderson traces throughout the play, represented by allusions to tomb-like houses, walls, rocks, wells, and the phantom of her would-be child sat on her chest.<sup>54</sup> This is all indicative of what McDermid sees as the ‘limits of [Yerma’s] female body, and the gender located and culturally constructed upon it’; Yerma’s body is trapped by ‘the prison of gender’.<sup>55</sup> The painful image of wasp stings compounds the pain of her failed maternity and the persistent torture of her menstrual blood. As Anderson observes, these are not ordinary stings; through Yerma’s ‘heightened’ language, the marks of these black-and-yellow creatures are ‘likened in turn to a nail being driven into the nape of her neck’.<sup>56</sup> This psychological torture enacted on the body only ends with Juan’s murder and the certainty that her menstrual blood will come every month: ‘Voy a descansar sin despertarme sobresaltada, para ver si la sangre me anuncia otra sangre nueva’ (p. 494).<sup>57</sup> Like the hope which pursues Rosita like a wolf in *Doña Rosita*, doubt is worse than the certainty of childlessness, in Yerma’s case, and spinsterhood, in Rosita’s.

These images of blood and motherhood in *Yerma* are accompanied by the white motif of breastmilk, which cruelly emphasise Yerma’s lack. The repeated references to breastmilk are all found in Yerma’s dialogue: ‘estos dos manantiales que tengo de leche tibia’ (p. 461), ‘ese arroyo de leche tibia [...] se les llene la cara y el pecho de gotas blancas’ (p. 473),

<sup>54</sup> Andrew Anderson, *García Lorca: Yerma* (London: Grant and Cutler, 2003), pp. 98–99. This sense of imprisonment is compounded by Juan’s repeated insistence that Yerma remain in the confines of their home and not stray from the female, domestic sphere: ‘Las ovejas en el rédil y las mujeres en su casa. Tú sales demasiado’ (pp. 457–58). ‘Sheep in their pen and women in their house. You go out too much’.

<sup>55</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 152. There are clear gender divisions in terms of activities and spaces in *Yerma*, and womanhood is inseparable from maternity as this is the only role the women are granted. In Act Two, Scene Two, Yerma states: ‘los hombres tienen otra vida: los ganados, los árboles, las conversaciones, y las mujeres no tenemos nada más que esta de la cría y el cuidado de la cría’ (p. 459). ‘Men have another life: livestock, trees, conversations, and we women have nothing more than this matter of the child and raising the child’. Lorca’s use of ‘cría’ reflects the play’s agricultural discourse as this term also refers to animal offspring. We see this marked division of space and tasks by gender in *Bernarda Alba* in Act Two when the women, sat inside sewing, listen to the male reapers’ song outside and lament the differences between the lives of men and women, and in Act One when Bernarda tells her daughters ‘hilo y aguja para las hembras. Látigo y mula para el varón’ (p. 320). ‘Needle and thread for the women. Whip and mule for the man’. As well as being a disapproving, colloquial term for a woman, ‘hembra’ is usually used to refer to the biological sex of an animal, reminding us of the discourse surrounding motherhood and women in *Yerma* in which women are paralleled with sheep and their children are described as their ‘young’.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: Yerma*, p. 75.

<sup>57</sup> ‘I am going to rest without starting awake to see if my monthly blood has come yet again’.

‘arroyos de leche tibia juegan y mojan la cara de las estrellas tranquilas’ (p. 484).<sup>58</sup> These images of milk are vital and pulsing, flowing in ‘manantiales’ and ‘arroyos’, which suggests colour movement and creates an important link between colour, natural processes, and the natural world. Lorca’s repetition of ‘tibia’ to describe this milk emphasises its vitality and its organic source: the milk is warmed by the mother’s body. ‘Manantial’, ‘spring’, captures the potential of Yerma’s breasts to produce milk, whilst the use of ‘arroyos’, ‘rivers’ in the figurative sense, in the other instances suggests an existing and powerful flow. In both of the latter images there are references to faces speckled with milk, the bodily colour of one person marking the body of another. However, this fertile bodily whiteness and reciprocity is contrasted with Yerma’s ongoing inability to conceive and her ‘pechos de arena’ (p. 452) and her outpouring of grief in Act Two, Scene Two:

YERMA

[...] Estos dos manantiales que yo tengo

de leche tibia, son en la espesura

de mi carne, dos pulsos de caballo,

que hacen latir la rama de mi angustia.

¡Ay pechos ciegos bajo mi vestido!

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<sup>58</sup> ‘Those two springs of warm milk that I have’, ‘this stream of warm milk [...] will spatter its face and chest with white droplets’, ‘streams of warm milk play and dampen the face of the peaceful stars’. In his essay ‘The Milk of Death’, Georges Didi-Huberman explores milk in ways which depart from this affirmative, natural, and life-giving portrayal, arguing that milk is not necessarily ‘pur’ as it is ‘toujours près de tourner, de cailler, de “bleuir”, de fermenter, de grumeler’, ‘Le Lait de la mort’ in *Blancs soucis* (Paris: Minuit, 2005), pp. 9–65 (p. 31). ‘Pure’, ‘always ready to turn, to curdle, to “turn blue”, to ferment, to go lumpy’. The second essay in Didi-Huberman’s volume, ‘White Concerns of our History’, probes Esther Shalev-Gerz’s 2005 installation which is based on the testimonies of Holocaust survivors. Here, whiteness is found in the silence of the victims’ recordings and in the horrifying effects of the Nazi programme of Aryan eugenics. See Georges Didi-Huberman, ‘Blanc soucis de notre histoire’, in *Blancs soucis* (Paris: Minuit, 2005), pp. 67–116. This essay is available in English translation on Shalev-Gerz’s website at <[http://www.shalev-gerz.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Blancs\\_soucis\\_EN.pdf](http://www.shalev-gerz.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Blancs_soucis_EN.pdf)> [accessed 11 September 2019]. See also Eric Robertson’s useful discussion of these two essays in “‘Le blanc souci de notre toile’: Writing White in Modern French Poetry and Art’, pp. 328–29.

¡Ay palomas sin ojos ni blancura! (p. 461).<sup>59</sup>

Yerma describes her breasts as ‘blind’ and lacking the symbolic ‘whiteness’ of fertility represented by the milk, an image which contrasts bodily colour, creation, and motion with her colourless and dry sterility.<sup>60</sup> This unusual adjective choice suggests a mourning of the visual agency of the breast; Yerma’s breasts are incapable of producing the visual whiteness of breastmilk. The obscure nature of the image is evocative of the surreal colour metaphors in *Mariana Pineda* which I explore in Chapter Four and which forms part of Lorca’s aim of unsettling his audience and challenging their expectations in his theatre of poetry. There is also a powerful rhythm of these images of milk; they ‘pulse’ and ‘beat’ with the strength of a horse’s heart. However, Yerma will never experience this nourishing, maternal whiteness. Like the conflict of sterile and fertile evocations of whiteness which Greenfield and Ziomek identify in *Bernarda Alba*, Andrew Anderson argues that the frequent allusions to implicit whiteness in *Yerma* – for example, sheep, lambs, wool, doves, sheets, light, milk, jasmine, frost, snow, and the moon – create a dialectic of natural, creative forms of whiteness that stands in stark contrast with ‘blankness [...] the negative side of *blancura*’ represented by the ascetic white house and Yerma herself: ‘¡Ay qué blanca, la triste casada!’ (p. 486).<sup>61</sup> Instead of blooming with life, Yerma’s body becomes increasingly arid, her flesh withering and her infertile body described by a dusty, neutral palette: ‘el vientre seco y la color quebrada’ (p.

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<sup>59</sup> YERMA ‘Those two springs of warm milk that I have, are, in the thickness of my flesh, two horses’ pulses that make the branch of my anguish beat. Oh, blind breasts beneath my dress! Oh, doves without eyes and without whiteness!’

<sup>60</sup> Despite claims that *Así que pasen* constitutes a hiatus in Lorca’s theatre, along with *El público*, the wedding dress mannequin’s dialogue is strongly evocative of this passage of *Yerma*, mimicking her fountains of milk and the wasp image in a discourse of blood, milk, and haunting: ‘dos fuentes de leche blanca mojan mis sedas de angustia y un dolor blanco de abejas cubre de rayos mi nuca’, (*Así que pasen*, p. 223). ‘Two fountains of white milk dampen my silks of anguish and a white pain of bees covers my neck in lightning bolts’. The verbal whiteness in the mannequin’s dialogue comes across as a hybrid of Lorquian women past and future. As well as Yerma, the mannequin evokes the Bride’s crown of orange blossom in *Bodas de sangre* (‘mi corona de azahar’, ‘my crown of orange blossom’, *Así que pasen*, p. 219); the ‘frost’ on Rosita’s and the Manola sisters’ bridal night gowns in *Doña Rosita* (‘ropa interior que se queda helada de nieve oscura’, ‘underwear that stays frozen with dark snow’, *Así que pasen*, p. 220); and the foam in María Josefa’s speech in Act Three of *Bernarda Alba* (‘sin que los encajes puedan competir con las espumas’, ‘without the lace being able to compete with foam’, *Así que pasen*, p. 220).

<sup>61</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: Yerma*, p. 70. ‘Oh how white the sad wife is!’

486).<sup>62</sup> ‘Quebrado’ in the sense of colouring can mean drained with fatigue yet, more literally, we can read her colour as ‘broken’; Yerma’s body is unable to achieve the red and white of motherhood. This dryness and pervasive lack is indicated from the beginning by the play’s title, although Yerma is not explicitly named until Act Two, Scene Two, sealing a fate which was instigated by her baptism, as Andrew Anderson suggests.<sup>63</sup> Yerma is only referred to by ‘name’ once within the play – leading Simon Stone in his controversial 2016 adaptation to rename the female lead ‘Her’ – and her name is inferred from the title. It has been argued that ‘yerma’ is not a proper name but an insult or an indication that her sense of personhood has been obliterated by her condition of childlessness. For example, Edwards observes that “‘Yerma’ is not a real name but an adjective to describe barren, desert-like land and which the villagers have cruelly applied to Yerma – “the barren one” – on account of her failure to produce a child’.<sup>64</sup> The agricultural image of infertility suggested by *yerma* recurs in Lorca’s use of *marchita*, which refers to the withering of vegetation, a term which we also saw in the Bride’s dialogue in *Bodas de sangre* earlier in this chapter. This wilting permeates the final scene of *Yerma*: the fertility prayer and ritual, Yerma’s argument with the Old Woman, and Yerma’s final fatal encounter with Juan. Yerma’s first line after she murders her husband is an acknowledgement of this state: ‘marchita, marchita, pero segura’ (p. 494).<sup>65</sup> Unlike the events of *Bodas de sangre*, this suffering is not the result of action. As Anderson observes, ‘there is no blame, it just is, a punishment which is ‘unfair, unjust, undeserved’ as Yerma has willingly conformed and ‘bought into the system’ yet she has still not conceived.<sup>66</sup> Like

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<sup>62</sup> ‘A dry abdomen, drained of colour’.

<sup>63</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: Yerma*, p. 92.

<sup>64</sup> Gwynne Edwards, ‘Introduction’, in Federico García Lorca *Yerma*, trans. by Gwynne Edwards (London: Methuen Drama, 2007), pp. v–lxv (p. xxviii).

<sup>65</sup> ‘Withered, withered, but certain’.

<sup>66</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: Yerma*, p. 94 and pp. 80–81. Anderson proposes that the various female characters in the play – including María, the First Girl, the Second Girl, the Old Woman, and the Washerwomen – allow Lorca to explore a range of views regarding marriage and maternity. For example, the Second Girl ‘flouts authority’ by claiming she does not want children and by having sexual intercourse with her boyfriend, whilst María ‘clearly embodies the most balanced implementation of these teachings’ and has ‘a caring, faithful relationship with her husband’, (*García Lorca: Yerma*, pp. 30–31).



Rosita's spiritual death in *Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje de las flores* (1935) and the dark scream which the women in *Bodas de sangre* are left with, Yerma's fate is worse than death.

Whilst I discuss the literal piercing of the male body later in the chapter as having the sharp, shocking effect of the punctum which Barthes describes, these colourful portrayals of inner pain have a different effect. Lorca uses these depictions of female suffering to express complex inner states, to burrow beneath the surface, and to create human, visceral characters of bones-and-blood in his theatre of poetry. These representations also emphasise the materiality of colour and the prevalence of implicit colour in Lorca's theatre of poetry, which forms the basis of my analysis in Chapter Four. However, the true power of this discourse of corporeal colour and wounding lies in its effect on the audience. In her study of the affective impact of the filmic image, Carol Mavor extends the piercing impact of the punctum to ideas of emotional 'bruising' and a residual impact, a reading which has clear chromatic ramifications due to its corresponding image of blackness and blueness. It is this wounding effect which we find in the speech of the Bride, the Mother, and Yerma. Unlike the male characters, who die a literal death, the women linger and their agony and grief remains with us. Lorca's portrayal of the raw, visceral pain of these women through a discourse of sores, ulcers, burns, blood, lacerations, and withering, is the essence of the power and longevity of his craft. We are haunted by these words and mental images far beyond any temporal restraints of text or performance; their pain permeates the text. Any successful production of these plays must capture this quintessential Lorquian 'bruising' impact. Charles Spencer, reviewing the 2006 production of *Yerma* at the Arcola Theatre for *The Telegraph*, admits

‘there are moments of raw hurt here that I found almost too painful to watch’.<sup>67</sup> Simon Stone’s controversial 2016 adaptation of *Yerma* at the Young Vic, which is only very loosely based on the original work, also captures this visceral, raw depiction of the pain of infertility. Ben Lawrence, also writing for *The Telegraph*, suggests that ‘you end up feeling numb with pity’.<sup>68</sup> This is not the brief, piercing impact inspired by a visual detail. Rather, it is something which hurts us deep inside and which remains long after that moment of encounter has passed. As *Yerma* tells us, ‘es mucho mejor llorar por un hombre vivo que nos apuñala, que llorar por este fantasma sentado año tras año encima de mi corazón’ (p. 474).<sup>69</sup>

Lorca’s exploration of colour and the male body is centred on acts of puncturing and stabbing, creating colour through the ‘literal’ piercing of the body and the spilling of male blood. These portrayals reflect Lorca’s sustained engagement with surface versus depth and his communication of complex mental states through the colours of the body. Within his exploration of male corporeality, Lorca creates a human theatre of bones-and-blood which both contrasts with and complements his depiction of female pain and bodily colour. The stabbing of the male body is a pervasive motif which we find in Perlimplín’s suicide by dagger in *Don Perlimplín*, the murder of the First Man and the torture of the Red Nude in *El público*, the execution of the Young Man by the three Fates or card players in *Así que pasen*, and the fatal knife duel between Leonardo and the Groom in *Bodas de sangre*. Robert Lima sees this series of violent deaths as ‘frequently resulting from an entry of a knife into human

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<sup>67</sup> Charles Spencer, ‘A Woman’s Pain Laid Bare’, *The Telegraph*, 30 August 2006, <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/drama/3654936/A-womans-pain-laid-bare.html>> [accessed 11 September 2019]. He adds that: ‘[Kathryn] Hunter, physically diminutive but with an extraordinarily deep and expressive voice, captures all the impotent rage and frustration of a woman who feels deprived of her natural destiny [...] She brilliantly captures the complex mixture of delight, curiosity, sour jealousy and grief with which a childless woman regards the apparently effortless progeny of others’.

<sup>68</sup> Ben Lawrence, ‘Billie Piper Will Make You Numb with Pity: Review’, *The Telegraph*, 5 August 2016 <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/billie-piper-will-make-you-numb-with-pity-in-yerma---review/>> [accessed 11 September 2019]. For Lawrence, it is Piper’s role as *Yerma* which invests this production with so much affective charge: ‘Appearing in all but one scene, she snares you – uttering each line with an extraordinary spontaneity which in turn brings an emotional truth that Stone’s production doesn’t always deserve’.

<sup>69</sup> ‘It’s much better to cry for the living man who stabs us, than to cry for this ghost sat year after year on my heart’.

flesh'.<sup>70</sup> However, whilst the knife motif has enjoyed the most critical attention, particularly in *Bodas de sangre*, the range of sharp objects in these plays is markedly varied. References throughout Lorca's theatre include 'bisturí', 'lanceta', 'jeringuilla', 'pica', 'tijeritas', 'aguja', 'hacha', 'espada', 'tiro' and 'flecha', in addition to 'puñal', 'cuchillo' and 'navaja'.<sup>71</sup> Even the ubiquitous knife blade in *Bodas de sangre* is described in increasingly creative forms by the characters: 'la luna deja un cuchillo abandonado en el aire' (p. 390), 'el aire va llegando duro, con doble filo' (p. 392).<sup>72</sup> The relationship between the sharp object and male flesh can be read as a dynamic between the inanimate object and the human body, a relationship which produces corporeal colour via object agency. These omnipresent metaphors foreshadow the 'literal' stabbing of the male body, and keep the vulnerability of male flesh at the forefront of our minds even when the male characters are 'stabbed' offstage.

Whilst the female body is a surface upon which emotions are metaphorically inscribed, Lorca's exploration of the male body is centred on what lies beneath the canvas-like skin, in line with Connor's interpretation of human skin in Western culture as 'a screen which lets out colour from within, especially, of course, the colour and the coursings of the blood'.<sup>73</sup> Although this is also the case for the female body, it is the male body which is 'literally' stabbed in Lorca's theatre. This 'screen' of skin is a surface layer which conceals, and then

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<sup>70</sup> Robert Lima, 'Blood Spilt and Unspilt: Primal Sacrifice in Lorca's *Bodas de sangre*', *Letras peninsulares*, 8.2-3, (1995), 256–59 (p. 256).

<sup>71</sup> 'Scalpel', 'lancet', 'syringe', 'pike/lance', 'scissors', 'needle', 'axe', 'sword', 'gunshot', 'arrow', 'dagger', 'knife', 'knife/razor'.

<sup>72</sup> 'The moon leaves a knife abandoned in the air', 'the air is hardening, like a double blade'. Rupert Allen comments on the 'natural tendency to see the moon as an ax blade [...] or knife, since the analogy of form creates a sympathy between the moon and cutting instruments', *Psyche and Symbol in the Theater of Federico García Lorca: 'Perlimplín', 'Yerma', 'Blood Wedding'* (Austin, TX and London: University of Texas Press, 1974), pp. 193–94.

<sup>73</sup> Connor, *The Book of Skin*, p. 155. In this study, Connor also draws our attention to the chromatic potential of the body beyond ideas of racial colour. Associations between the body and non-racial colour date back to Hippocrates's (460-370 BC) humoral theory in which the four elements of the earth corresponded to the bodily fluids of black bile, phlegm, blood, and yellow bile. Connor notes that due to how skin colour and bodily fluids are affected by disease, corporeal colour is often seen in medical or pathological terms. He cites examples such as chlorosis or green-sickness, yellow fever, scarlet fever, purpura, jaundice, Black Death, cholera (Greek *chole*, yellow or black bile), candidiasis or fungal infections (Latin *candidus*, white), leukaemia (Greek *leukos*, white), melanoma (Greek *mavro*, black), and cyanosis or blue-jaundice (Greek *kyanos*, dark blue), (*The Book of Skin*, pp. 154–55).

reveals, the crimson of blood underneath as it is spilled, represented in different stages of dryness and viscosity. Considering the male body as a site of internal as well as external colour and as a vessel for bodily fluids reminds us of the labile rather than passive and decorative possibilities of colour. It also highlights the importance of the blood motif as part of Lorca's work with implicit colour, particularly in the spilling of male blood in *Bodas de sangre* and *Así que pasen*, and his probing of what lies beneath the surface in his theatre of poetry.

The body as a screen for redness is central to the blood discourse of *Bodas de sangre*. This is also the play in which Lorca gives the most sustained attention to the dynamic between male flesh and the knife motif, leading Lima to suggest that the knife becomes a 'sinister protagonist', a menace which is continually reaffirmed by the Madre's obsession with and fear of 'todo lo que puede cortar el cuerpo *de un hombre*' (p. 311).<sup>74</sup> The blade has an ominous recurring presence in the dialogue as both 'cuchillo' and 'navaja' and is even central to the baby's lullaby, metaphorically present in the 'puñal de plata' (p. 323) which pierces the horse's eye.<sup>75</sup> The knife incites fear and power even in its diminutive forms as 'el cuchillo más pequeño' (p. 311) and 'un cuchillito que apenas cabe en la mano' (p. 412).<sup>76</sup> This repertoire of piercing tools makes blood a central image to *Bodas de sangre*, as indicated by the very title. Blood has multiple competing connotations in the play, such as the hereditary blood line, the blood feud between two families, the 'elemental instinctive force of life' and erotic passion, and the loss of virginity, as Reed Anderson observes.<sup>77</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>74</sup> Lima, p. 256. 'Everything that can cut *a man's body*'. My emphasis.

<sup>75</sup> 'Silver dagger'.

<sup>76</sup> 'The smallest knife', 'a little knife that is barely as big as your hand'.

<sup>77</sup> Reed Anderson, *Federico García Lorca* (Macmillan Education Ltd: Hampshire and London, 1984), p. 100. As Morris tells us, due to the pervasiveness of these blood images, at times we forget the lack of visual redness: 'we have been so conditioned by constant visions of blood spilt and prophecies of blood to be spilt that it may come as a surprise to learn that the red yarn [in Act Three, Scene Two] is the first time that Lorca actually puts the colour before our eyes instead of before our imagination', (*García Lorca: Bodas de sangre*, pp. 50–51). It is only in the final scene where blood becomes visual as the Bride returns with her hair and skirt soaked in that of her lovers.

Lima sees blood as indicative of honour, passion, temperament, vitality, fertility, fate, and the libation made to the earth.<sup>78</sup> Depictions of blood in *Bodas de sangre* have several essential implications for my reading of colour in Lorca's theatre of poetry. First, redness is often a mobile, liquid force which is described in terms of flowing and spilling as the punctured male body is drained of its vital life-force. Unlike the motifs of blood and milk in *Yerma*, these bodily colours are not part of a creative cycle but are indicative of processes of exsanguination and death. Leonardo and the Groom become 'dos cántaros vacíos [...] dos arroyos secos' (p. 388), and 'dos hombres duros con los labios amarillos' (p. 312).<sup>79</sup> This morbid yellow is a rare engagement with explicit bodily colour in the play. Their blood soaks the earth and the Bride's hair and clothes and they lose their fleshy softness and their vital redness. Sometimes Lorca invests this labile redness with eruptive values, such as the Moon's and the Second Woodcutter's references to blood as 'esta fuente de chorro estremecido' (p. 392) and 'el chorro' (p. 396) respectively in Act Three, Scene One.<sup>80</sup> This is a pulsing and rapid flow of blood which is prone to spurt from the male body in violent ways, a jet of redness leaving the male body. Lorca's use of 'estremecido', trembling, enhances the kinaesthetic properties of this image. Like the bursts of colour and Lorca's portrayal of chromatic desire in *Bernarda Alba* that I explored in Chapter Two, this gush of redness is suggestive of an orgasmic surge of chromatic bliss. This eruptive, fatal colour force draws on the connotations between death and sex suggested by the established term 'la petite mort'.

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<sup>78</sup> Lima, pp. 256–59.

<sup>79</sup> 'Trembling, spurting fountain', 'two empty pitchers [...] two dry streams', 'two stiff male bodies with yellow lips'. These mobile, violent images of redness add to the tension of the play as we wait for the spilling of blood, which now seems inevitable, and are present throughout the dialogue. For example, in the lullaby in Act One, Scene Two we are told that 'la sangre corría más fuerte que el agua' (p. 323) and in Act Two, Scene Two the Mother describes her elder son's spilled blood in terms of flowing: 'por eso es tan terrible ver la sangre de uno derramada por el suelo. Una fuente que corre un minuto y a nosotros nos ha costado años' (p. 368). 'The blood flowed faster than water', 'that's why it's so terrible to see someone's blood spilt all over the floor. A fountain which flows for a minute but which has cost us years'.

<sup>80</sup> 'That trembling jet-like fountain of blood', 'a stream'.

Secondly, like the haptic qualities of the images of blood and milk in *Yerma*, Lorca's exploration of blood in *Bodas de sangre* is steeped in the sensory. As spent blood congeals, it becomes more viscous, creating images of a sticky, darkening redness. However, these representations of blood are not limited to the tactile. Indeed, there are several disturbing references to the gustatory qualities of blood. In Act Two, Scene Two, the Mother describes herself as licking her elder son's blood from her hands upon his death: 'Me mojé las manos de sangre y me las lamí con la lengua. Porque era mía' (p. 368). Here, Lorca combines the haptic, gustatory, olfactory, and even auditory values of this redness with a maternal possessiveness, creating a ferocious and primal portrayal of motherhood which reflects the almost uncontrollable instincts that drive the characters in this play and reminds us of the colouring of maternity in *Yerma*. These multi-sensory evocations of bodily colour continue in Act Three, Scene One, when the Second Woodcutter and the Moon anticipate the spilling of the lovers' blood as their escape is foiled by the blue light of the moon. The Second Woodcutter suggests that their spilled blood will be imbibed by the earth – 'sangre que ve la luz se la bebe la tierra' (p. 387) – a gustatory act which is echoed in the Moon's repeated reference to its bloodied cheeks: 'esta noche tendrán mis mejillas roja sangre' (p. 390), 'para que esta noche tengan mis mejillas dulce sangre' (p. 391).<sup>81</sup> The sinister nature of the Moon character is accentuated by the cruelty of its dialogue and these disturbing images of it drinking blood and revelling in death. The Moon also appeals to the haptic and auditory qualities of blood: 'que la sangre me ponga entre los dedos su delicado silbo' (p. 392).<sup>82</sup> The 'delicate whistle' of blood against its fingers captures both the noise and the texture of its

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<sup>81</sup> 'Blood that sees the light is drunk by the earth', 'tonight my cheeks will have red blood', 'so that tonight my cheeks will have sweet blood'. The descriptions of the Mother lapping her son's blood and of the Moon imagining blood on its cheeks denote a vampiric digestion of redness, which is emphasised by the reference to 'sweetness' in the latter. In his discussion of portrayals of whiteness and death in Western visual culture, Richard Dyer argues that colour is central to the vampire myth: 'Because vampires are dead, they are a pale cadaverous, white. They bring themselves a kind of life by sucking the blood of the living, and at such points may appear flushed with red, the colour of life', (p. 210).

<sup>82</sup> 'Let the delicate whistle of blood run through my fingers'.

colour-sensation, a delicate red silk or satin which slips through the hands, creating a multi-sensorial image in which redness can be slippery and smooth as well as sticky and glutinous.

The combination of these eruptive and sensory portrayals of redness captures what Smith sees as the play's pervasive 'erotic charge'.<sup>83</sup> Both Smith and Wright read the deaths of Leonardo and the Groom as a homoerotic union particularly due to the phallic symbol of the knife.<sup>84</sup> However, we do not see this death scene in the play and instead the male body becomes a 'lost object' which is 'at the centre of García Lorca's practice of tragedy', as Smith suggests.<sup>85</sup> Whilst we see Perlimplín's blood and the dagger in his chest, and Leonardo and the Groom's blood on the Bride's hair and clothing, in *Bodas de sangre*, *Don Perlimplín*, and *El público* the stabbing of the male body is withheld from the stage, with the exception of the Red Nude in *El público*. In turn, the death of the Young Man in *Así que pasen* is bloodless; he is killed when the First Player shoots an illuminated heart projected onto the wall. This is not out of respect for audience sensibilities as Lorca is not afraid of subverting our expectations and shocking us with visual details. Rather, the focus of his theatre of poetry is a metaphorical exploration of surfaces and an engagement with human emotion and grief, rather than literal bodily pain. In *Bodas de sangre* it is not the act of stabbing which is important but the visceral grief that it sparks in the female characters, enhancing the powerful dialogue and corporeal wounding of the Mother and the Bride. Although these evocations of redness are rarely explicit or visual, Morris observes that 'there is no escape from mentions and pictures of blood in this play; and the shedding of it is reported or predicted in a

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<sup>83</sup> Smith, *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, p. 46.

<sup>84</sup> Smith proposes that the male body in *Bodas de sangre* becomes eroticised 'even as it lies rigid and swollen in death' particularly in Langston Hughes's translation in which homoeroticism become explicit, (*Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, p. 54). However, these intimations are not necessarily present in the original text. Rather, as Wright argues, the play's climax displaces the traditional *Liebestod* fantasy, 'the perfect union of male and female counterparts in death', as the two men taking the place of the star-crossed lovers, (*The Trickster Function*, p. 101).

<sup>85</sup> Smith, *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, p. 58.

succession of gory echoes'.<sup>86</sup> As I argue throughout this chapter and in Chapter Four, Lorca's use of verbal colour is most impactful when it is also staged in material form: the raw female dialogue and the pervasive motif of blood finally become a physical force when the Bride returns soaked in blood in the final scene. However, verbal redness is also impactful due to its frequent repetition. Throughout *Bodas de sangre* the implicit redness of blood is a pervasive mental image which continually reinstates the central poetic motif in ways that appeal to the sensory and labile power of bodily colour, and form part of Lorca's exploration of an instinctive and immersive theatre of poetry.

The eruptive and sensory capacity of spilled male blood and its chromatic output are also important in the final scene of *Así que pasen*. As we wait for the Players or Fates to finish their game of chance with the Young Man, their dialogue is replete with forceful images of blood which foreshadow the Young Man's impending death. The jet-like movement of blood which we find in *Bodas de sangre* is echoed in the Players' discussion of the pallid Young Man and of a past victim:

JUGADOR 1.<sup>o</sup> (*Al 2<sup>o</sup>*) No aprenderás nunca a conocer a tus clientes. ¿A éste? La vida se le escapa en dos chorros por sus pupilas, que mojan la comisura de sus labios y le tiñen de coral la pechera del frac.

JUGADOR 2.<sup>o</sup> Sí. Pero acuérdate del niño que en Suecia jugó con nosotros casi agonizante, y por poco si nos deja ciegos a los tres con el chorro de sangre que nos echó (pp. 264–65).<sup>87</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Morris, *García Lorca: Bodas de sangre*, p. 51.

<sup>87</sup> FIRST PLAYER (to SECOND): 'You will never learn to know your clients. Him? His life is escaping in two jets through his pupils, moistening the opening of his lips and staining the front of his dinner jacket coral'. SECOND PLAYER: 'Yes. But remember the boy who played with us in Sweden. He was close to death, and still nearly blinded the three of us with that gush of blood'. Due to the colour description we can infer that 'la vida' in the first example refers to blood.



Like *Bodas de sangre*, these portrayals of blood underscore the kinaesthetic and violent properties of material redness in Lorca's theatre through the repetition of 'chorro' and the allusion to nearly being blinded by this viscous, choking force. Lorca's use of 'mojar' and 'teñir' capture the power of this red fluid to tint and change the colours of bodies and objects, reminding us of the staining agency of hued colour and blackness in *Bernarda Alba* and of the Bride soaked in blood in *Bodas de sangre*. The reference to 'blood' moistening 'la comisura de sus labios' again suggests a gustatory value of redness, which is intensified by First Player's reference to the playing cards which 'beben rica sangre' (p. 264).<sup>88</sup> As in *Bodas de sangre*, male blood is tasted and is described in comestible terms, here 'rica' rather than 'dulce'. However, these powerful images of redness are not made visual in the Young Man's rare on-stage death. Rather, this is a highly stylised and surreal scene:

*En este momento, en los anaqueles de la biblioteca aparece un gran as de coeur iluminado. El Jugador I. ° saca una pistola y dispara sin ruido con una flecha. El as desaparece, y el joven se lleva las manos al corazón* (p. 270).<sup>89</sup>

Despite the verbal references to blood in this scene, the Young Man dies a bloodless death as the First Player shoots the illuminated ace of hearts on the bookcase; the ace disappears and the Young Man clutches his chest as he dies. This is a striking scene in which the ghostly Players are dressed in black suits and long white capes, which Farris Anderson sees as indicative of a 'deathly pallor'.<sup>90</sup> However, the theatrical and unusual nature of the scene is

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<sup>88</sup> 'Drink tasty/rich blood'.

<sup>89</sup> 'In that moment, a large illuminated ace of hearts appears on the library shelves. The First Player draws a pistol and soundlessly shoots it with an arrow. The ace disappears, and the Young Man clutches his chest'.

<sup>90</sup> Farris Anderson, 'The Theatrical Design of Lorca's *Así que pasen cinco años*', *Journal of Spanish Studies*, 7. (1979), 249–78 (p. 273). Throughout his article, Anderson draws our attention to the metatheatrical nature of *Así que pasen*, which he argues is 'one of the central organizing principles' of the work, which can be seen as 'theatre is dialectical in structure', 'theatre is framed in time and space', 'theatre's figuration of reality is miniaturised' and 'the reality configured by theatre is contrived and temporary'. Whilst metatheatrical concerns are not unique *Así que pasen*, Anderson suggests that in this work Lorca uses 'inner theatre to clarify the experiences of his characters and to strengthen the structure of his drama' in particularly 'bold and effective' ways, (p. 249–51).

less potent than the raw grief and pervasive threat of the knife in *Bodas de sangre*, leaving us surprised rather than moved by this aesthetic and anti-mimetic portrayal of death. Rather than an outpouring of redness this is a detached and quasi-cinematic vision of death which avoids the literal piercing of the male body through the proxy of the illuminated, theatrical heart.

Lorca's portrayal of bodily colour in *Así que pasen* is more deeply rooted in the white, moribund male body which does not produce redness in visual form because it has already been drained of its life force and colour. This whiteness is more effective in Lorca's vision of a theatre of poetry because the verbal references are reinforced in the materiality of the staging and in the Young Man's bodily movements. The pallor of the Young Man's body and his bloodless death are indicative of a process of exsanguination and the bleaching of colour which is dominant from the beginning of the play. Wright argues that *Así que pasen* can be read as 'a sort of "frozen progression"' of photographs in which we move from one 'essentially dead image' to the next.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, Wright proposes that *Así que pasen* could be a fully-developed version of one of Lorca's unfinished 'photographic' plays in which he suggests 'la escena ha de estar impregnada de ese terrible silencio de las fotos de muertos y ese gris difuminado de los fondos'.<sup>92</sup> If we read the play as not only a series of static photographic images but also as a series of 'fotos de muertos', the body, particularly the Young Man's body, takes on new meanings. Unlike the romanticised depictions and ethereal beauty of the white bodies of the Butterfly and Mariana discussed earlier in this chapter, the Young Man's whiteness is part of a more abject, eerie representation which substitutes the positive haptic values of silk and ermine with wax, ice, and withered leaves. The Young

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<sup>91</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, pp. 82–83. Here, Wright draws on Barthes's reading of the 'strange stasis' of photography in contrast with cinema where 'the photograph, taken in flux, is impelled, ceaselessly drawn towards other views', (*Camera Lucida*, p. 91 and p. 89). Photography is thus synonymous with a type of death. In answer to his question 'what is it that will be done away with, along with this photograph which yellows, fades, and will someday be thrown out [...]?', Barthes finds that the answer is life, the sense that 'this was alive, this posed live in front of the lens', (*Camera Lucida*, p. 94).

<sup>92</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 83. Lorca is originally cited in Marie Laffranque, p. 20. 'The scene must be impregnated with that terrible silence of photos of the dead and that grey which blurs the backgrounds'.

Man's physical appearance, with his bloodless, white waxen cheeks and hands, frozen teeth, and withered lips, evokes the dead body: 'esas mejillas de cera' (p. 175), 'una mano de cera cortada' (p. 212), 'mi otro novio tenía los dientes helados; me besaba, y sus labios se le cubrían de pequeñas hojas marchitas. Eran unos labios secos', (p. 200).<sup>93</sup> In the final scene of the play, this bleaching of bodily colour and vitality is complete. The outfit which the servants have laid out for the Young Man – a mo[ur]ning suit and leather shoes 'que tienen cinta de seda negra' (p. 262) – is funereal, a 'prelude to his own spiritual and physical death' as Edwards observes.<sup>94</sup> In terms of the Young Man's physical appearance, Lorca tell us that the character '*da muestras de una gran desesperanza y un desfallecimiento físico*' (p. 260).<sup>95</sup> Like the fainting, white-clad Rosita at the end of *Doña Rosita* and the pallid Mariana in her shroud-like white dress in *Mariana Pineda*, Lorca imprints the Young Man's body with the physical and chromatic signs of his movement towards death.

The motifs of the stabbed male body and the spilling of bodily colour in *Don Perlimplín* and *El público* have a more disquieting effect than the visceral discourse of bodily wounding in *Bodas de sangre* and the corporeal fading of the Young Man in *Así que pasen*. Both *Don Perlimplín* and *El público* reflect in different ways an assault on the male body which is indicative of disturbed mental states and comprise a translation of the psyche into evocations of material colour, as I explored in my analysis of *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two. Whilst José Badenes has interpreted Perlimplín's suicide in *Don Perlimplín* as representative of a Christological bodily sacrifice which draws on the *auto sacramental* tradition, there is also an abundance of evidence which supports John Lyon's reading of Perlimplín as a

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<sup>93</sup> 'Those cheeks of wax', 'a hand carved of wax', 'my other boyfriend had frozen teeth; he kissed me and his lips were covered with little withered leaves. They were dry lips'.

<sup>94</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 112.

<sup>95</sup> 'Shows signs of deep despair and physical exhaustion'. Instead of using 'desmayar', from the Old French 'esmaier', Lorca chooses 'desfallecer', from 'fallecer', which has shifted semantically from 'to deceive or trick' in Latin to 'to die' in Castilian. Here, Lorca uses the richness of Spanish language to align the sapping of the Young Man's physical strength with a temporary state of 'death' or a 'pre-death', foreshadowing his actual demise. Whilst its contemporary connotations are orgasmic, the term 'la petite mort' originally meant 'the brief loss or weakening of consciousness' according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

complex, ever-changing character with a wide range of motivations, including revenge.<sup>96</sup> There are multiple facets to Lorca's exploration of male bodily colour in *Don Perlimplín* which stand in contrast to the erotic whiteness of Belisa's body explored earlier in this chapter. First, Perlimplín troubles the division between 'male' and 'female' forms of wounding through his expression of emotional pain at the end of Scene One when he describes himself as feeling love 'como un hondo corte de lanceta en mi garganta' (p. 277) and suggests that he is 'herido de amor', wounded by '[un] bisturí de cuatro filos, garganta roto y olvido' (p. 286).<sup>97</sup> The 'deep' cut of the lancet and the quadruple blade of the scalpel which leaves his throat 'broken' work together to create an image of a violent attack against the male body, suggestive of a severing of the head from the body and thus of the psyche from the soma. The use of 'olvido' implies a forgetting of his body, and also a descent into oblivion in which his power of speech and ability to breathe are compromised. It is not clear whether Perlimplín is impotent or whether he truly acknowledges Belisa's infidelity. However, either way throughout the play Perlimplín suffers from 'esta oscura pesadilla de [su] cuerpo grandioso', as he tells us in the final scene (p. 301).<sup>98</sup>

This is a bodily wounding sparked by the body of another, a profusion of redness which portrays the pain of Belisa's inaccessible bodily whiteness. This metaphorical wounding is supported by Belisa's threat of killing Perlimplín to protect her 'lover', which is also focused on the piercing of his throat – '(Desesperada) Marcolfa, bágame la espada del comedor que voy a atravesar la garganta de mi marido' (p. 301) – and by Perlimplín's literal

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<sup>96</sup> See José Badenes, "'This Is My Body which Will Be Given Up for You": Federico García Lorca's *Amor de Don Perlimplín* and the Auto Sacramental Tradition', *Hispania*, 92.4 (2009), 688–95, and Lyon pp. 241–42. The *auto sacramental* was a type of Spanish morality play, usually with a religious theme, which was popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, such as Calderón's *El gran teatro del mundo* [The Great Theatre of the World] (c. 1634). The Eucharist sacrament was often an important feature. Badenes argues that Perlimplín's death evokes this religious rite as the Eucharist liturgy which refers to Christ's sacrifice of his body and of his blood comprises 'precisely the kind of self-sacrificing love found in *Amor de Don Perlimplín*' as 'it has to do with the oblation of the body for another out of love', (p. 691).

<sup>97</sup> 'Like a deep lancet cut in my throat', 'wounded by love', 'a four-bladed scalpel, broken and forgotten throat'.

<sup>98</sup> 'That dark nightmare of [her] magnificent body'.

stabbing of his body with the emerald dagger.<sup>99</sup> Of the plethora of sharp instruments in the play – the scalpel and lancet, the sword, the ‘puñal de esmeraldas’ or ‘este ramo ardiente de piedras preciosas’ (p. 302) with which he stabs himself – only the emerald dagger is materially present, the green jewels merging with the tactile qualities of the red velvet and his spilled blood.<sup>100</sup> As I discuss in my analysis of material colour in the stage directions in Chapter Four, the red cloak and the green dagger are central to Lorca’s theatre of poetry in *Don Perlimplín*. Despite the cruelty of his plan of deceiving Belisa and his disturbing glee when he tells Marcolfa ‘¡[...] don Perlimplín no tiene honor y quiere divertirse! (p. 296), his actions are suggestive of madness and a fracturing subjectivity rather than of simple revenge. Perlimplín becomes detached from the ultimate stabbing of his own body, developing a male alter-ego whom he associates with his unfulfilled visions of masculinity yet simultaneously feels the need to destroy. Although his actual stabbing takes place offstage, we see his bloodstained chest and the protruding dagger when he returns. Lorca does not withhold the resulting bodily redness of the dagger but rather keeps the act offstage in order to demonstrate the extent of Perlimplín’s belief in the illusion he has created. This allows Perlimplín to remain in his role as the admirer in the red velvet cape even when he is mortally wounded. In his own troubled narrative, Perlimplín is not the victim, but rather the attacker: ‘*Tu marido acaba de matarme con este puñal de esmeraldas*’ (p. 302).<sup>101</sup> Perlimplín’s insistence on maintaining the two different roles in this scene captures the extent to which his psyche has become fractured as he splits himself into two men who are simultaneously killed by the puncturing green dagger.

Whilst male bodily colour in *Don Perlimplín* results from self-inflicted injuries, in *El público* bodily wounding and its chromatic output are centred on acts of violence towards

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<sup>99</sup> (*Desperate*) ‘Marcolfa, get me the sword from the dining room; I’m going to run my husband through the throat’.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Emerald dagger’, ‘this burning branch of precious stones’.

<sup>101</sup> ‘*Your husband* has just killed me with this emerald dagger’. My emphasis.

others, which is represented in the dialogue and by the quasi-surgical mistreatment of the Red Nude in Scene Four. Whilst there are few physical demonstrations of violence in the play, Kay García argues that the characters' dialogue and the stripping away of costumes creates an 'atmosphere [which] is charged with an overwhelming and shocking violence, principally because of the reference to off-stage occurrences and the constant threat of physical assault'.<sup>102</sup> What Wright identifies as a pervasive trend of 'sexual violence and ambivalence towards the other' is central to the Director's discourse, particularly towards the First Man.<sup>103</sup> Whilst Beatriz Cortez argues that the dynamic between male bodies is indicative of sadomasochism, the Director's verbal violence towards the First Man is not a mutually gratifying exchange, but rather a cruel assault which is more indicative of sadistic pleasure derived from the abasement of the other.<sup>104</sup> This is not a generic rejection of homosexuality or certain types of homosexuality, as Jonathan Mayhew proposes in his reading of Lorca's poem 'Oda a Walt Whitman' (1929) [Ode to Walt Whitman].<sup>105</sup> Rather, it is reflective of the Director's self-disgust and deep-seated psychological problems as he struggles against his sexual desires, part of Lorca's troubling of surface appearances in his theatre of poetry and of his expression of the inner reality of his complex characters of bones-and-blood.

The Director's relationship with the First Man comprises a cruel and disgusted dynamic of desire and rejection which stems from his own suffering. Whilst colour seems to be less explicit in these verbal portrayals, it is an implicit part of these images of pierced and lacerated skin and of the drawing of blood. In Act One, the Director expresses a desire to embroider the First Man's skin as part of a cruel and painful rejection of his body:

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<sup>102</sup> Kay García, 'Violence in Two Plays by Federico García Lorca', in *Violence in Drama*, ed. by James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 205–13 (p. 209).

<sup>103</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, pp. 110–11.

<sup>104</sup> See Beatriz Cortez, 'Sadomasoquismo y travestismo en *El público* de Federico García Lorca: Un reto al heterosexismo compulsivo', *Hispanófila*, 133 (2001), 31–42.

<sup>105</sup> See Mayhew, pp. 143–63. Mayhew argues that there are two types of homosexuality prevalent in the poem, the private and the public. He proposes that 'one of the things that bothers the speaker of the Ode the most is the public, *uncloseted* nature of urban homosexuality', (p. 153). Original emphasis.

DIRECTOR (*Frío y pulsando las cuerdas*) Gonzalo, te he de escupir mucho.

Quiero escupirte y romperte el frac con unas tijeritas. Dame seda y aguja.

Quiero bordar. No me gustan los tatuajes, pero lo quiero bordar con sedas [...]

HOMBRE 1.º (*Llorando*) ¡Enrique! ¡Enrique!

DIRECTOR Te bordaré sobre la carne [...] (p. 83).<sup>106</sup>

The Director's 'coldness' is contrasted with the weeping of the First Man, and his references to 'seda y aguja', 'bordar' and 'tatuajes' capture the piercing of naked male flesh with needles. Unlike the social ritual of tattooing, the Director's figurative 'sewing' of the First Man's skin is a sadistic image which contrasts craftsmanship with the infliction of suffering and pain. Both the acts of tattooing and embroidering skin involve repeated piercing, creating images of an agonising rhythm of puncturing, with pinpricks of blood breaking the surface and signs of inflamed reddened skin. In the motif of embroidery Lorca captures a disturbing and possessive chromatic marking of the male body, a meticulous act of craftsmanship which involves the continual piercing of male flesh.

The exchange between the Figure with Gold Bells (the Director) and Figure with Red Vine Leaves (the First Man) in Act Two depicts a similarly sadistic attack on the First Man's body, a struggle which uses objects in perverted and non-typical ways and which contrasts images of blood with the anti-mimetic red and gold costumes:

FIGURA DE PÁMPANOS (*Con voz débil*) [...] ¿Y si yo me convirtiera en un granito de arena?

FIGURA DE CASCABELES Yo me convertiría en un látigo.

FIGURA DE PÁMPANOS ¿Y si yo me convirtiera en una bolsa de huevas pequeñas?

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<sup>106</sup> DIRECTOR (*Cold and strumming the guitar strings*) 'Gonzalo, I have to spit on you a lot. I want to spit on you and cut up your dinner jacket with some little scissors. Give me silk and needle. I want to embroider. I do not like tattoos, but I want to embroider you with silks [...]'. FIRST MAN (*Crying*) 'Enrique! Enrique!' DIRECTOR 'I will embroider your flesh [...]'.

FIGURA DE CASCABELES    Yo me convertiría en otro látigo. Un látigo hecho con  
cuerdas de guitarra.

FIGURA DE PÁMPANOS    ¡No me azotes!

FIGURA DE CASCABELES    Un látigo hecho con maromas de barco.

FIGURA DE PÁMPANOS    ¡No me golpees el vientre!

FIGURA DE CASCABELES    Un látigo hecho con los estambres de una orquídea.

FIGURA DE PÁMPANOS    ¡Acabarás por dejarme ciego! (pp. 92–93).<sup>107</sup>

The repeated references to whips made of differing and anomalous materials – guitar strings, ship rope, and implicitly coloured (yellow?) orchid stamens – suggest the metaphorical laceration of the First Man’s body. The different widths, textures, and strengths of these materials evoke wounds which are equally varied, creating an imaginary pattern of lacerations on the First Man’s skin. Again, this is an excessive wounding of the male body which conjures images of shredded, oozing skin that reveal the colour of flesh and blood beneath. The First Man’s fear of blindness suggests that the figurative whipping would not be limited to certain areas of the body, and captures the extreme nature of the Director’s frenzied violence and the First Man’s subsequent mental torment. The Director’s passionless comments are contrasted with the First Man’s trembling and ‘voz débil’ and with the move from the interrogative mood to the imperative mood in the First Man’s speech, a pleading effect which is emphasised by exclamation marks. The Director’s metaphorical torture of the First Man’s body, and the ‘real’ psychological torment he causes, reveals a troubled and violent subjectivity rooted in the flagellation and puncturing of the object of his rejection or of his desire.

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<sup>107</sup> FIGURE WITH RED VINE LEAVES (*In a weak voice*) ‘[...] And if I turned into a grain of sand?’ FIGURE WITH GOLD BELLS ‘I would turn into a whip’. RED VINE LEAVES ‘And if I turned into a sac of tiny eggs?’ GOLD BELLS ‘I would turn into another whip. A whip made of guitar strings’. RED VINE LEAVES ‘Don’t whip me!’ GOLD BELLS ‘A whip made from ship rope’. RED VINE LEAVES ‘Don’t hit my abdomen!’ GOLD BELLS ‘A whip made from orchid stamens’. RED VINE LEAVES ‘You will end up leaving me blind!’



The overall effect of this verbal violence and implicit colour images for the audience is Barthes's original formulation of the punctum. The lingering, bruising effect which we find in *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma*, and in *Don Perlimplín*, to a lesser extent, is replaced by the repeated affective shocks of extreme violence against the body as Lorca translates the piercing of the body into the 'pricking' of the spectator. These effects are compounded by Lorca's portrayal of the Male Nurse's 'treatment' of the Red Nude in Scene Four of *El público* which is a rare example of the 'actual' piercing of the male body in this play and which brings the poetic theme of violence to the stage in material form. The scene opens with the Red Nude hanging from a perpendicular hospital bed, wearing a crown of blue thorns, his naked red skin evocative of spilled blood. Wright describes this portrayal as '[an] aestheticized, represented, mediated [...] spectacle of pain'.<sup>108</sup> The obvious Christological references are distorted and afforded surrealistic values by both the colour scheme and the aesthetics of the scene, which Lorca tells us is intended to mimic a 'primitive' painting. As McDermid observes, this is a 'perverted enactment of the Passion of Christ' which transports these religious motifs to a 'quasi-medical' environment and imbues the Biblical narrative with 'a surgical thread'.<sup>109</sup> The disturbing and 'piercing' nature of this scene is intensified by the Red Nude's medical 'treatment':

DESNUDO Yo deseo morir. ¿Cuántos vasos de sangre me habéis sacado?

ENFERMERO Cincuenta. Ahora te daré la hiel, y luego, a las ocho, vendré con el bisturí para ahondarte la herida del costado (p. 130).<sup>110</sup>

This is a surgical approach to the body, but one which is inverted and perverted in its focus on the draining of the patient's blood and the widening of his wound. The Male Nurse does

<sup>108</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 122.

<sup>109</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 135 and pp. 138–39.

<sup>110</sup> MALE NUDE 'I want to die. How many pints of blood have you taken?' MALE NURSE 'Fifty. Now I will give you the honey then, at eight o'clock, I will come with the scalpel to widen the wound on your side'. Lorca's use of 'vaso' evokes 'vaso sanguíneo', blood vessel or vein, which intensifies this image of the draining of blood.

not take pleasure from this draining and piercing of the male body. Rather, he is dispassionate and chillingly logical, and the Red Nude does not challenge his ‘treatment’. Although visually the colour of the Red Nude’s skin would conceal the further spilling of blood, the audience can envision endless layers of different textures and shades of redness provoked by the taking of blood and by the images of his lacerated side. The anti-mimetic colouring of the scene and its distorted perspective combines the sharp shock of these images with unsettling instances of material colour which challenge the audience. Like Lorca’s portrayal of the Young Man’s death in *Así que pasen*, the torture and death of the Red Nude is a stylised proxy of the brutal death of the First Man, who appears in agony on the reverse of the hospital bed as it rotates on its axis at the end of the scene. Rather than offering us mimetic depictions of human pain, Lorca elevates these moribund bodies to a poetic plane which rejects realism and uses the body and its colours to confront, and overturn, the audience’s expectations in visual terms.

Another important aspect of Lorca’s theatre of poetry in *El público* is the materialisation of his quest for what lies beneath the surface. Lorca makes this poetic motif flesh in the staging – the X-ray windows, the transformative portable screen, and the vast range of coloured costumes – and through his troubling of the corporeal boundaries. Wright argues that the body in *El público* is one susceptible to infiltration and to piercing; it is ‘open, vulnerable to attack, to assault, penetration and even to emptying out’, producing bodily colour through blood and other bodily fluid and excretions.<sup>111</sup> Wright supports Andrew

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<sup>111</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 116. For Wright, the body in *El público* is representative of Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘grotesque body of carnival’, which he explores in his 1965 study of Rabelais, as Lorca emphasises ‘images of waste and excretions’ and ‘the lower bodily stratum, as well as the body’s orifices’, standing in contrast with the ‘closed and individualised’ Renaissance body, (*The Trickster Function*), pp. 106–07. This sealed-off body is also found in *El público* in the depictions of plaster body parts which evoke Classical sculptures, including Elena’s feet and the Emperor’s hands, as I discuss later in this chapter. This lapidary whiteness takes us back to the realm of colour and architecture and to David Batchelor’s comparison of Bakhtin’s classical body and the art collector’s ascetic white house. He notes: the idea that anything might protrude, bulge, sprout or branch off from this sheer whiteness was inconceivable [...] this space was clearly a model for how a body ought to be: enclosed, contained, sealed’, (*Chromophobia*, pp. 18–19).

Anderson's reading of the play as a journey 'from outside the body to deep within it'<sup>112</sup> and traces the progression from the outer costumes and accoutrements, including cosmetics and hair, to representations of bare skin, flesh, blood, and bone.<sup>113</sup> We 'see' inside the queered body as we journey through various colours of skin, red flesh and muscle, yellow fat, red blood, white vomit, and white bone. For Wright, this is 'an impressively graphic configuration of the human body' which also creates 'a highly suggestive image of the body fragmented, broken, and dismembered', an important avant-garde motif which recurs in Lorca's drawings and in his film script *Viaje a la luna* (1929) [Journey to the Moon].<sup>114</sup> In *El público*, parts of the body also become costume-like, such as the Second Man's 'capa de músculos que utilizo cuando quiero' (p. 107) and the Black Horse's reference to 'el último traje de sangre' (p. 117) in which the redness of the body is conflated with the chromatic materiality of the costumes.<sup>115</sup> Conversely, the costumes become bodies; the discarded harlequin, pyjama and ballerina costumes become anthropomorphised ghosts, zombified bodies which lack an inner entity. Everything is removable and can be stripped away, including what Wright defines as 'the visual accoutrements to gender'.<sup>116</sup>

The troubling of gender identity which Wright and McDermid explore in *El público* is representative of Lorca's theatre more generally and has enjoyed sustained critical attention.<sup>117</sup> Through these depictions of male and female suffering in his theatre of poetry Lorca exposes the psychological effects of the inflexible and harmful constraints of gender

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<sup>112</sup> Anderson, "Un difícilísimo juego poético", p. 332.

<sup>113</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 108.

<sup>114</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 108.

<sup>115</sup> 'Cape of muscles that I use when I want to', 'the last costume of blood'.

<sup>116</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 90.

<sup>117</sup> See Wright's discussion of androgyny in *El público*, *Así que pasen*, and *Bodas de sangre* in *The Trickster Function* pp. 87–04; McDermid's exploration of masculinity and queering in *El público* (*Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 126–32 and pp. 138–41), gender inversion in *Yerma* (pp. 150–60), and gender performance and camp in productions of *Bernarda Alba* (pp. 175–90); Paul Julian Smith's reading of *Yerma* as an intersexual type in *Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, pp. 24–33; and Bettina Knapp's analysis of hermaphroditism in *Bernarda Alba*, 'Federico Garcia Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*: A Hermaphroditic Matriarchate', *Modern Drama*, 27.3 (1984), 382–94.

constructed and policed by society. His engagement with corporeal colour, found in the bruises, burns, sores, lacerations, and spilled blood, his penetration of the layers of the body, and his communication of inner subjective states, is an important part of this critique of a rigid vision of gender. Lorca's communication of the inner turmoil of female characters such as the Bride, the Mother, and Yerma – an anguish triggered by the marital and maternal demands of society and by the honour code, as we also see in *Bernarda Alba* – finds its counterpart in the penetration and exsanguination of his male protagonists. Rather than a sacrifice of manhood, as Carlos Feal and José Badenes suggest respectively, or even a reversal or re-appropriation of phallic power, the perforation of Lorca's male characters can be seen as part of a broader rejection of the restrictions of gendered and sexual categories and the accompanying boxing-in of individuals.<sup>118</sup>

As well as expressing the visceral, inner pain of men and women dominated by rigid gender roles and social norms through the chromatic output of the wounded body, Lorca uses anti-mimetic bodily colour and materials to promote a disquieting queering of the body. We find the most explicit portrayals of this chromatic queering in *El público* and *Así que pasen*. In her analysis of *El público*, Kay García distinguishes between physical violence, whether verbal or visual, and 'aesthetic violence' which she defines as 'the use of violent *colours* and sounds, violent emotions, shocking vocabulary and concepts, and breaking with the traditional conventions of the theatre'.<sup>119</sup> We find this 'violent' evocation of colour in *El público* in the bright red body of the Red Nude (p. 129), and in the grey skin of the Centurion (p. 95), Juliet's '*pechos de celuloide rosado*' (p. 108), and Elena's blue eyebrows (p. 84).<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Carlos Feal reads the off-stage death of the men in *Bodas de Sangre* as a sacrifice of manhood before 'las fuerzas femeninas o maternas', 'El sacrificio de la hombría en *Bodas de sangre*', *MLN*, 99 (1984), 270–87 (p. 287). 'Feminine or maternal forces'. In contrast, José Badenes suggests that throughout Lorca's plays 'embodied patriarchal heteronormative manhood is [...] immolated and sacrificed onstage' and instead a more androgynous homosexual masculinity is advocated, 'Martyred Masculinities: Saint Sebastian and the Dramas of Tennessee Williams and Federico García Lorca', *Text and Presentation*, 5 (2008), 5–17, (p. 14).

<sup>119</sup> García, p. 204. My emphasis.

<sup>120</sup> 'Pink celluloid breasts'.

Bodies also take on object properties and absorb non-human materials in a blending of sensate and insensate which reflects Lorca's rejection of verisimilitude in his theatre of poetry. As well as Julieta's 'celluloid' breasts, the Pyjama Costume's face is '*blanca, lisa y comba como un huevo de avestruz*' (p. 123) and Elena's feet (p. 84) and the Figure with Red Vine Leaves's nude body (p. 97) are made of '*yeso*', like the restrictive mask which the Director refers to in Act Three (p. 118).<sup>121</sup> These representations of literal whiteness subvert the colours of the real human body. In *Así que pasen* bodily colour is equally challenging, particularly in the representation of 'female' bodies. As well as disturbingly dehumanised female bodies, which Wright proposes represent 'images of femininity as frozen, static and stultified', these anti-mimetic portrayals continue Lorca's queering of the body through colour and materiality in his theatre of poetry.<sup>122</sup> The Mannequin's anti-mimetic grey and gold bodily colouring – '*la cara gris y las cejas y los labios dorados*', '*lleva peluca y guantes de oro*' (p. 219) – contrast with its ornate white wedding dress, train and veil in the stage directions, and the verbal references to whiteness in its dialogue.<sup>123</sup> Its discourse has patent haptic values, referring to coloured and textured materials such as silver, sand, gold, mirrors, feathers, flesh, leaves, moss, snow, milk, and blood, with a particularly emphasis on the silk of its costume. This is a disturbing and ghostly evocation of 'femininity' which enhances Lorca's portrayal of the corporeal fading and exsanguination of the Young Man. This white, gold, and grey 'body' is fragmented and disembodied; in the final scene it is now missing its head and its hands. The First Mask is equally evocative of aesthetic violence and the dehumanised 'body' with its yellow silk hair and white plaster mask. This character is '*una llamarada*', an explosion of yellow and gold which stands out against the '*azules lunares y*

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<sup>121</sup> 'White, smooth, and curved like an ostrich egg'. 'Yeso' can signify gypsum or plaster, particularly medical plaster.

<sup>122</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 77. She sees this portrayal as rooted 'in outer accoutrements which signify an inner hollowness', (p. 77). This depiction complements McDermid's reading of Julieta's celluloid breasts as 'hollow, transparent, flexible, and artificial', (*Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 120).

<sup>123</sup> 'A grey face and golden eyebrows and lips', 'it wears a gold wig and gloves'.

*troncos nocturnos*' of the setting.<sup>124</sup> The costume and materials invade and replace human flesh, creating a queer and anti-mimetic body which forms part of Lorca's challenging theatre of poetry. Lorca's use of anti-mimetic bodily colour and materials to portray male, female and non-human characters moves beyond a male-female binary in favour of experimentation and a queer, Modernist body which challenges and troubles audience expectations and strengthens the combined effect of the affective 'bruising' and 'piercing' of the audience.

Throughout these works Lorca's exploration of the bodily, 'human' dimensions of his theatre of poetry begins with an apparently gendered portrayal of corporeal colour which gives way to a more fluid approach to gender and sexuality that complements the ambivalence and experimentation of his theatre and his priority of depth over surface appearance. The initial symbolic values inherent in Lorca's depictions of white female body segue into a more complex probing that problematizes corporeal 'whiteness' and instead creates a discourse of deeply-rooted human suffering. This is rendered in somatic terms in the female characters' dialogue and the 'literal' stabbing of the male body, creating a lingering affective impact which leaves us figuratively black and blue. My discussion of the implicit colour of the wounded body and of the labile motifs of blood and milk reveals a highly material aspect of Lorca's colour-work which is often neglected and which is centred on the creative power of maternity and the destructive forces of exsanguination and death. The affective impact of eruptions of male blood on the audience is enhanced by the sharp, pricking effect of the punctum, a three-dimensional animation of the unsettling and piercing photographic detail which Barthes explores. These gendered depictions of suffering give way to a queering of the body through an exploration of anti-mimetic bodily colour and materials which creates a more stylised and disconcerting representation of poetry made human.

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<sup>124</sup> 'A burning flame', 'blue spots and nocturnal trunks'.

## Chapter Four: Object Colour and Lorca's 'Theatre of Poetry'

This final chapter examines the role of object colour in Lorca's creation of a holistic theatrical experience which makes full use of the inter-relativity of the linguistic and material elements of the medium of theatre. I will explore how Lorca 'makes poetry flesh' in his characters, particularly in the colours of their costumes, and probe the role of colour in the sets, lighting, and props in terms of the transference of key linguistic symbols and themes from page to stage as 'la poesía se levanta del libro y se hace humana'.<sup>1</sup> I will focus on Lorca's works which are guided by a central aesthetic vision in the title or subtitle: *Mariana Pineda* (1925), *Amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (1925), and, less explicitly, *Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje la de las flores* (1935), building on my discussion of the role of photography and the overarching visual and verbal conception of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) in Chapter Two. I begin with a consideration of the sensory and chromatic qualities of flowers in *Doña Rosita*, considering how Lorca communicates Rosita's emotional suffering through a blending of flowers and flesh that evokes the somatic discourse of *Bodas de sangre* (1932) and *Yerma* (1934) and exploring the role of 'the language of flowers' and her costume in this portrayal. In *Mariana Pineda* Lorca uses costume colour to reflect or contrast with the colours of the sets, lighting, and props, weaving the hues of the *estampa* throughout the play. I consider Lorca's sensory engagement with the motif of the implicit yellow quinces and compare the effects of all of these visual evocations of colour with the surreal colour metaphors in the dialogue. The colours of the material staging in *Don Perlimplín* also reflect Lorca's aesthetic vision of the play, and act as a visual representation of Perlimplín's transformation from a stock figure to character of bones-and-blood. My discussion of costume colour in this play leads me to explore the Shoemaker's Wife's visual

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<sup>1</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 730. 'Poetry gets up from the book and becomes human'.

presentation in *La zapatera prodigiosa* (1926) as the embodiment of the poetic themes and emotions of the play, and to probe how Lorca creates a contrast between this character and others in the work. Throughout this chapter I consider how successful these portrayals are in terms of Lorca's aims in his theatre of poetry.

The personification of flowers or the attribution of floral qualities to the human body is a recurring theme in Lorca's theatre. Robert Havard, Sumner M. Greenfield, and Concha Zardoya have all commented on the paralleling of Mariana with flowers in *Mariana Pineda*,<sup>2</sup> whilst Margaret Rees draws our attention to the links between people and flowers in *La zapatera*, *Bodas de sangre*, and *Yerma*.<sup>3</sup> Belisa is also described as 'una azucena' (p. 269) and 'encendida como un geranio' (p. 295) in *Don Perlimplín*.<sup>4</sup> Whilst flowers are an important motif throughout Lorca's theatre, in *Doña Rosita* they become integral. The range of flowers in *Doña Rosita* is astonishing, comprising over thirty species and leading Rees to comment on Lorca's botanical knowledge, comparing him to British horticulturalist Clay Jones.<sup>5</sup> The importance of the motif of flowers is emphasised in both the play's title – which refers to the nineteenth-century courtship tradition of communicating through the set symbols of a 'language of flowers' as I discuss later in this chapter – and the subtitle which categorises the work as '[un] poema granadino del novecientos dividido en varios jardines,

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<sup>2</sup> See Robert Havard, 'Mariana Pineda: Politics, Poetry, and Periodization', in *Leeds Papers on Lorca and on Civil War Verse*, ed. by Margaret Rees (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1988), pp. 45–66 (pp. 53–54); Sumner M. Greenfield, 'The Problem of *Mariana Pineda*', *The Massachusetts Review*, 1.4 (1960), 751–63 (p. 757); and Concha Zardoya, 'Mariana Pineda: romance trágico de la libertad', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 1.1-2 (1968), 471–97 (p. 492). Lorca compares Marina to irises, roses, jasmine, and yellow rosemary flowers in *Mariana Pineda*; women to poppies, roses, and tuberose in *La zapatera*; men, women, and the baby boy to carnations, dahlias, geraniums, lilies, pinks, sunflowers, and daisies in *Bodas de sangre*; and Yerma's longed-for baby to jasmine in *Yerma*. Whilst Gwynne Edwards translates both 'lirio' and 'azucena' as 'lily', I read the former as 'iris' in line with Andrew Anderson's discussion of Lorca's differentiation between the two flowers in his article "'Lirio" and "azucena" in Lorca's Poetry and Drama', *Anales de la Literatura Española Contemporánea*, 11.1-2 (1986), 39–59. Whilst 'lirio' comes from the Latin root *lilium*, lily, and sometimes the two words can be synonymous, the RAE specifies that 'lirio' is of the *iridaceae* genus.

<sup>3</sup> Rees, pp. 89–91.

<sup>4</sup> 'A lily', 'lit up like a geranium'.

<sup>5</sup> Rees, p. 86.



con escenas de canto y baile'.<sup>6</sup> In *Doña Rosita* the comparison between Rosita and the mutable rose forms a central part of the play's structure, its dialogue, and the characterisation of the eponymous protagonist. The rose appears as a real flower in her Uncle's greenhouse until he fatefully cuts the stem in Act Two, symbolically foreshadowing Rosita's spiritual death, and in the form of the mutable rose poem in all three Acts. Lorca divides the play into three temporally distinct Acts which reflect the three stages of the rose's life cycle: morning, afternoon, and evening. He also uses the mutable rose poem in a structural way by repeatedly linking it to Rosita's appearances on stage, and by using it as a way of questioning Rosita's location within the group of spinster sisters in Act Two. The colour aspect of this mutable rose aesthetic is explicit in Castilian due to the dual meaning of 'rosa' as both 'rose' and 'pink'. This pinkness is mirrored in the colours of Rosita's costumes. *Doña Rosita* is a prime example of how Lorca uses the visual presentation of his characters to reflect key linguistic themes and symbols, 'dressing' his characters of bones-and-blood in 'un traje de poesía' as part of his theatre of poetry.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in an interview in 1935, Lorca tells us that 'yo pretendo hacer de mis personajes un hecho poético [...] Son una realidad estética'.<sup>8</sup> Lorca makes Rosita the embodiment of the aesthetic of the play by dressing her as the rose. Her costumes change from pink to pale pink to white throughout the play, and the varying styles of her dresses (leg-of-mutton sleeves in Act One, a bell-shaped skirt in Act Two) evoke the shapes of blossoms or petals. Lorca expands on this further when he describes the changing styles during the play: 'polisón, cabellos complicados, muchas lanas y sedas sobre las carnes, sombrillas de colores' in Act One (1885), 'talles de avispa, faldas de campanula' in Act Two

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<sup>6</sup> 'A nineteenth-century Granadan poem divided into various gardens, with scenes of song and dance'.

<sup>7</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 730. 'A costume of poetry'.

<sup>8</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 716. 'I aim to make my characters a poetic fact [...] They are an aesthetic reality'.

(1900), and ‘falda *entravée*’ in Act Three (1911).<sup>9</sup> However, this visual alignment is problematized by several factors. Whilst the chromatic values of ‘rosa’ as ‘pink’ are paralleled in Rosita’s costumes, the mutable rose itself is described as ‘roja como sangre’ (p. 221) in the morning and as turning white as evening falls.<sup>10</sup> There is no visual alignment between Rosita and the first stage of the rose as her costume is never red. Furthermore, the mutable rose is not explicitly described as pink; its pinkness is implied by what is assumed to be a gradual transition from red to white. Lorca himself contradicts this reading, describing the rose as ‘[una] flor que por la mañana es roja; más roja al mediodía; a la tarde, blanca, y con la noche se deshace’.<sup>11</sup> This is compounded by Lorca’s use of the simple present tense when he describes the flower as turning white, which indicates a more sudden transformation than the present continuous tense or ‘irse’: ‘*se pone* blanca, con blanco de una mejilla de sal’ (p. 221).<sup>12</sup> The reference to ‘coral’ in the poem, which seems to imply pinkness in Act One, is also challenged by the Uncle in Act Two when he suggests that ‘en el mediodía, es roja como el coral’ (p. 274).<sup>13</sup> This is not to say that Lorca did not see Rosita in floral terms. On the contrary, he describes her as ‘una doncella en flor, una doncella sin cortejo [...] [que] vive en un carmen florido’ and ‘dura y fragante como un nardo’.<sup>14</sup> Rather, the pinkness of Rosita’s costume points to a faded version of the rose motif; she already lacks the intense colours of

<sup>9</sup> *Prosa 1*, p. 723. ‘Bustle, complicated hairstyles, lots of wools and silk worn over flesh, coloured parasols’, ‘wasp waists, bellflower skirts’, ‘hobble skirts’. This extraordinary range of fabrics and textures is typical of Lorca’s theatre. Different types of lacework are present in most of Lorca’s works and he also incorporates acts of knitting, sewing, skein-making, and embroidery into the action of his plays, which emphasises the craft-like nature of his colour-writing through verbs such as ‘tejer’. The range of coloured fabrics throughout Lorca’s theatre – including ‘terciopelo’, ‘seda’, ‘cuero’, ‘charol’, ‘pana’, ‘raso’, ‘lana’, ‘malla’, ‘muselina’, ‘popelinette’, ‘gasa’, ‘moaré’, and ‘armiño’ – is enhanced by highly detailed embellishments – ‘agremanes’, ‘borlas’, ‘espejitos’, ‘abalorios’, ‘botones’, ‘plumas’, ‘lentejuelas’, ‘flecós’, ‘cascabeles’, ‘clavos’, ‘bordados’, and, of course, ‘encajes’ – not to mention the different shapes, cuts, and styles of clothing. ‘Velvet, silk, leather, patent leather, velveteen or corduroy, satin, wool, tulle, muslin, poplinette, chiffon, moire (processed rippled silk), and ermine’. ‘Brocade, tassels, mirrors, glass beads, buttons, feathers, sequins, fringe, bells, studs, embroidery, and lace’.

<sup>10</sup> ‘As red as blood’.

<sup>11</sup> *Prosa 1*, p. 724. ‘[A] flower which is red in the morning; redder in the afternoon; white in the evening, and as night falls its petals fall away’.

<sup>12</sup> ‘It turns white, as white as a cheek of salt’. My emphasis.

<sup>13</sup> ‘It was still red, in full bloom in the afternoon it is as red as coral’.

<sup>14</sup> *Palabra de Lorca*, p. 440. ‘A maid in flower, a maid who hasn’t been courted [...] [who] lives in a floral inner garden’, ‘firm and fragrant like a tuberose flower’.

the natural world when the play begins. The poem exposes the burning pain and substance beneath the placid floral exterior of Rosita's name and costume in powerful embodied terms; she is 'la vida mansa por fuera y requemada por dentro de una doncella granadina'.<sup>15</sup> Thus Rosita is a deeply feeling and passionate human being who is red in colour in the poem and red inside, both bodily and in terms of the metaphorical power of this colour to represent vitality. However, the appearance she gives is pink and attenuated; she is limited and diminished as a human being by her social circumstances.

The emotional reality of Rosita's spinsterhood and her role as a faded, less vital version of the mutable rose is also conveyed through the language of flowers, bringing the linguistic and material elements of the work together in Lorca's theatre of poetry. Much of the existing criticism on *Doña Rosita* focuses on the 'language of flowers' as having two distinct, competing components. Catherine Nickel comments on the contrast between a life of 'free creative expression', indicated by verse, and one of mundane repetition, reflected in the 'restricted standardized speech' of the prose passages.<sup>16</sup> Francie Cate-Arries reads the play as a juxtaposition of Rosita's 'repressed realm of unfulfilled wishes and passions' reflected in the mutable rose poem versus the 'socially condoned world of acceptable appearances' indicated by the traditional 'Lo que dicen las flores' song.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, María Pao suggests that the dichotomy of the play's language lies in the distinction between Rosita's stasis as the embodiment of the fixed, written word of the language of flowers tradition and the more transient oral/auditory dimension of the speech of the Aunt and the Housekeeper, which is

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<sup>15</sup> *Prosa 1*, p. 723. 'The life of a young unmarried Granadan woman – placid on the outside and burning on the inside'. This image of inner burning under the surface of social respectability and expectations speaks more broadly of the suffering of Lorca's protagonists and reminds us of the Bride in *Bodas de sangre* and Adela in *Bernarda Alba*.

<sup>16</sup> Catherine Nickel, 'The Function of Language in García Lorca's *Doña Rosita la soltera*', *Hispania*, 66.4 (1983), 522–31 (p. 527).

<sup>17</sup> Francie Cate-Arries, 'The Discourse of Desire in the Language of Flowers: Lorca, Freud, and *Doña Rosita*', *South Atlantic Review*, 57.1 (1992), 53–68 (p. 60).

evocative of action and a life fully lived.<sup>18</sup> These are all persuasive readings given the plethora of poems and songs in the play and, of course, its structural poetic motif of the mutable rose. However, Noël Valis argues against binary readings of the language of flowers, such as conscious–unconscious and prose–poetry, suggesting instead that it has multiple, complex, and sometimes competing layers which defy such classification and which all form part of the expression of ‘the deeper, less sayable meanings of the play’.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Lorca tells us that the rose ‘es como el símbolo del pensamiento que he querido que recoger [...] pensamiento que la propia doncella repite una y otra vez’.<sup>20</sup> Rather than a secondary element of the play the language of flowers is the key to our understanding of Rosita’s inner pain.

There are two central elements of the language of flowers. The main manifestation is the mutable rose poem, which recurs throughout the play. In the poem, Lorca portrays the rose through red and white tones with strong haptic associations. Through these coloured textures, he seeks to create an embodied viewing experience which captures the corporeality of Rosita’s role as the rose by inspiring mental pictures and evoking sensory experiences in the spectator’s imagination. Elaine Scarry’s study of mental re-creation in English literature suggests that the text can act as a set of written instructions which guide the reader as they re-picture this lush imagery in their imagination. The concept of mental re-creation can also be used to refer to our reception of the dialogue in aural form, particularly when colours are explicitly stated or objects carry strong and unequivocal chromatic associations. Laura Marks’s study of the olfactory offers useful ways of considering the sensory experience sparked by these mental images in a different context, particularly her exploration of the

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<sup>18</sup> See María Pao, ‘Reading Rosita or the Language of Flowers’, *Hispanic Research Journal*, 10.4 (2009), 321–35. Pao argues that the seemingly trivial, everyday conversations woven throughout the play are in fact of utmost importance as they capture ‘the activities that fill in the space of this play’, and offer insight into ‘women’s talk and women’s concerns’ and the realities of Granadan domestic life through the motifs of clothing, flowers, and food, (p. 323–24).

<sup>19</sup> Valis, p. 259.

<sup>20</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 724. ‘Is like the symbol of the thought which I wanted to capture [...] [A] thought which the young lady herself repeats again and again’.

simultaneously private and public nature of olfactory experiences. She suggests that there are two aspects to this sense experience: the 'wild uncoded dimension which we can't communicate', which she refers to as 'the olfactory imaginary', and the social element, as the scents of particular foods evoke certain memories and give us 'the quality of socialising with a community even if others are absent'.<sup>21</sup> Marks's concept of the private nature of the 'olfactory imaginary' and the ways in which sensory experiences can be evoked by a non-interactive medium, in the sense that the audience cannot actively touch the objects, enhances my discussion of how Lorca creates a *sensory* imaginary by appealing to the spectator's memories of real sense experiences through acts of mental re-creation inspired by the dialogue. Through his exploration of the sensory values of flowers Lorca reinforces Rosita's poetic incarnation as the rose. The mutable rose poem is first introduced by Rosita's uncle at the beginning of Act One:

Tío

Cuando se abre en la mañana.

roja como sangre está.

El rocío no la toca

porque se teme quemar.

Abierta en el mediodía

es dura como el coral.

El sol se asoma a los vidrios

para verla relumbrar.

Cuando en las ramas empiezan

los pájaros a cantar

y se desmaya la tarde

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<sup>21</sup> Marks, 'Thinking Multisensory Culture', p. 135.

en las violetas del mar,  
se pone blanca, con blanco  
de una mejilla de sal [...] (p. 221).<sup>22</sup>

The core images introduced by the first iteration of the poem reveal a wide range of natural object colours, both explicit ('roja', 'blanca') and implied ('sangre', 'violetas', 'coral', 'sal'). The explicit colour terms are combined with objects which have clear colour associations, further emphasising the two core colours of the rose. These images also have strong sensory values, particularly in terms of texture, appealing to our sensory imaginary through these mental pictures. Rees has commented on both Lorca's tendency to attribute floral smells to people – the mother's deceased husband in *Bodas de sangre*, Yerma's longed-for child in *Yerma*, and the Mayor's description of women as scented roses and 'mujeres que les huele el pelo a nardos' in *La zapatera* (p. 224) – and the unusual textures which Lorca applies to flowers, such as 'camelias de escarcha' in *Bodas de sangre* (p. 408).<sup>23</sup> Lorca's depiction of haptic experiences in the poem is equally potent, inspiring a range of specific tactile sensations in the sensory imaginary. The changing textures of the mutable rose – blood, coral, and salt – are intertwined with implicit colour associations that complement Lorca's more explicit references to red and white. These object colours reflect the flower's transition from the glutinous haptic values of blood with its coppery scent to the harder, more granular textures of coral and salt as the rose loses its succulence and becomes brittle in the mind's eye. Despite the lack of red in Rosita's costume, these mutating colour textures still reflect her deteriorating physical state as she wilts like the rose. The salt mimics the desiccation and

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<sup>22</sup> UNCLE 'When it opens in the morning, it is as red as blood. The dew doesn't touch it for fear of being burnt. In full bloom in the afternoon, it's as hard as coral; the sun peeks through the glass to see it shine. When the birds begin to sing on the branches and evening falls into the violets of the sea, it turns white, as white as a cheek of salt [...]'.  
<sup>23</sup> Rees, p. 93. 'Women whose hair smells of tuberose', 'camellias of frost'.

preservation of a corpse, evoking what Valis calls Rosita's 'living death',<sup>24</sup> a fate which the Housekeeper sees as worse than physical death: 'cuando enterré a mi niña fue como si me pisotearan las entrañas [...] Pero esto de mi Rosita es lo peor' (p. 282).<sup>25</sup> The reference to salt also has gustatory values, inspiring a sharp taste in the sensory imaginary which mirrors the bitterness of a life unlived. Through these colourful haptic images of the rose Lorca strengthens the parallels between this central motif and Rosita's own withering and spiritual death, the verbal aspects of his colour-work reinforced to some extent in her visual appearance. The sensory potency of the poem would be enhanced further by more explicit references to the rose in the staging, particularly in terms of redness in the first Act.

The language of the mutable rose poem also draws our attention to Rosita's emotional pain through a discourse of bodily wounding, emphasising the corporeal dimension of Rosita's portrayal as the poetic symbol of the rose made flesh through the haptic values of the red and white flower. Lorca's use of 'roja como sangre' and 'mejilla de sal' reminds us that the poem actually narrates the decline of the human as well as floral body. This parallel is strengthened by his description of the 'fainting' violets in the poem, a comparison which imbues flowers with human qualities and is similarly linked to blood flow. He also depicts the rose as 'encarnada' in the iteration of the poem at the end of Act One (p. 235).<sup>26</sup> This blending of flowers and flesh continues throughout the play, becoming increasingly evocative of bodily violence through the combination of the redness of blood with mental images of floral mutilation. Rosita communicates the pain of her fiancé's departure in terms of 'heridas

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<sup>24</sup> Valis, p. 253. Valis argues that 'something dies in Lorca's play – illusions, love – but something else persists like a ghost, haunting readers and spectators alike: the image of Doña Rosita herself', (p. 250). It is this 'haunting', lingering affect which I refer to in my discussions of emotional bruising and Mavor's reading of the residual impact of the punctum.

<sup>25</sup> 'When I buried my girl it felt like somebody was trampling on my insides [...] But this thing with Rosita is worse'.

<sup>26</sup> 'Encarnada' means 'red' as well as 'flesh-coloured' but the root of the word comes from 'carne', 'flesh'.

rojas como el alhelí' (p. 236) and 'jasmín desangrando' (p. 237).<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the version of the poem which Rosita intersperses with the 'Lo que dicen las flores' song in Act Two temporarily introduces a more material, carnal dimension which affects the other characters as the Third Spinster sings: 'sobre tu largo cabello gimen las flores cortadas. Unas llevan puñalitos; otras, fuego, y otras, agua' (p. 268).<sup>28</sup> This image recurs in the Uncle's dialogue in Act Two when he compares the cutting of roses to the severing of his own fingers (p. 253), aligning the mutilation of flowers with human bodily properties and emphasising his personal distress through a discourse of corporeal suffering. The ways in which Lorca portrays flowers as experiencing physical pain through a discourse centred on blood and the piercing of human flesh combine the motif of female bodily wounding as the expression of inner pain in the dialogue of the Bride, the Mother, and Yerma with the portrayal of the stabbing and puncturing of the male body, both of which I explored in Chapter Three. First, Rosita's bodily expression of her emotional pain, which is dominated by the redness of blood, offers us a visceral insight into her inner reality which leaves us emotionally bruised, to use Mavor's description of the emotional power of the filmic image, by the vision of her suffering. Secondly, these images have the effect of the punctum, like the wounding of the male body by sharp objects. As I explored in Chapter Three, Barthes's concept of the punctum refers to the affective impact of the photographic detail, a reading which I extended to 'literal' acts of bodily piercing in Lorca's theatre. Rees has noted that Lorca often transforms flowers from symbols of beauty into images of 'wounds, blood, death, and grief', and suggests that 'these metaphors that bring together wounds and blossoms are as much of a

<sup>27</sup> 'Wounds as red as wallflowers', 'jasmine bleeding out'. There is a plethora of references to red and white in Rosita's dialogue with her cousin which perpetuate these flesh-like or bloody images and the colours of the mutable rose poem. These include: 'nardos de espuma y sosiego', 'mi balcón de jazmines', '[una rosa que] se puso encarnada, siendo blanco su color', 'mi blancura', 'el llano carmesí', 'nardos en remolino', 'el palomo de mi fe', and 'los diamantes de Dios y el clavel de su costado', as well as depictions of ice, snow, frost, fog, burning, and fire. 'Calm tuberose of foam', 'my balcony of jasmines', '[a rose which] turned red, white being its colour', 'my whiteness', 'the crimson plain', 'a whirlpool of tuberose', 'the dove of my faith', 'the diamonds of God and the carnation of his side'. The latter refers to the crucified Christ's wounded side. All primary source references are pp. 235–37.

<sup>28</sup> 'Cut flowers groan in your long hair. Some of them carry tiny daggers; others fire, and others, water'.



shock to the senses as the slit eyeball in Buñuel's *An Andalusian Dog*.<sup>29</sup> Whilst these verbal images of stabbing are not as potent as the visual image like Rees suggests, as I problematize in my analysis of the mostly off-stage nature of male stabbing in Lorca's plays in my analysis in Chapter Three, they do have a 'piercing' impact on the spectator. They create a small, sharp shock as we picture these violent images and add our own memories and conception of bodily pain to the world of textures already constructed in our sensory imaginary. These corporeal images remind us that Rosita is not only floral on the surface as represented by name and costume. Rather, Rosita's body takes on the material properties of the rose. Rosita describes her feelings in terms of roots – 'tengo las raíces muy hondas' (p. 254) – and, as the curtain falls and the flower loses its petals, she too loses her life source, fainting like 'la tarde en las violetas del mar' as she repeats the last line of the poem.<sup>30</sup> Despite the beauty of the images in the poem – the sensual coloured scents of the rose and the violets, and the dazzling qualities implied by 'relumbrar', 'quemar', 'vidrios', 'estrellas', and 'raya' – Lorca's sensory and colourful portrayal of flowers exposes the mutable rose's lifespan as a distinctly human trajectory of decay and death. Through sensory and bodily evocations of object colour in the poem Lorca reminds us that Rosita is the flesh-and-blood version of the poetic symbol of the rose, and is thus capable of great physical and mental suffering.

The second core manifestation of the language of flowers is the 'Lo que dicen las flores' song in Act Two, which explores Rosita's inner reality through the contrast between the traditional, typified elements of the song and the more visceral expressive mode of the

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<sup>29</sup> Rees, pp. 93–94. Rees suggests that this shocking conflation of flowers and wounding 'should be no surprise, since the Surrealists of Lorca's generation, in their determination to jolt people out of their mental ruts, regularly compared the traditionally beautiful with the traditionally horrible or humdrum', (p. 93). However, Rees sees Lorca's floral imagery as equally influenced by the Baroque poet Luis de Góngora, whom Lorca praised in his lectures on 'La imagen poética de Don Luis de Góngora' (1926-1930) [The Poetic Image of Don Luis de Góngora]: 'When Góngora created images, says Lorca, the object as it is in nature was transformed in the camera obscura of the poet's brain and emerged as something new and individual. The same metamorphosis takes place when Lorca introduces flowers into his writings. They are mysterious, powerful forces of nature, sometimes surreal, sometimes violent, but portrayed with that delight in beauty on a miniature scale which Lorca himself says is typical of artists from Granada', (pp. 94–95).

<sup>30</sup> 'My roots are deep'.

poem, a juxtaposition which is made flesh in the characters of Rosita and the Spinster sisters. The song draws on the traditional form of the language of flowers or floriography, originating in France in the late eighteenth century, which used floral imagery as a means of emotional expression. Initially, the traditional, recited elements of the song seem to stand in weak contrast to the powerful imagery of the poem which Rosita integrates within it, Lorca's more visceral, embodied version of a language of flowers. Nickel suggests that despite the similarity in terms of form and theme, and the ways in which both invoke the symbolic, 'the rose poem does so in a highly original creative way while the flower ballad reiterates relationships which have been reduced by constant repetition through time to mere formulae' and is 'only a hollow approximation of the intense physical and emotional experience Rosita seeks'.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Valis sees the language of the song as 'limited and highly typified'.<sup>32</sup> However, these criticisms fail to take into account the link between the song and Lorca's characterisation of the Spinster sisters, especially as a contrast to Rosita. It is unhelpful to see the poem and the song as binary, as I discussed earlier. Rather, the two different forms and sources are an equal part of Lorca's version of a language of flowers indicated in the title, working together to communicate the struggle between individual and society and to capture these opposing and overlapping forces within it. The various gardens to which Lorca refers in the play's subtitle are not merely physical spaces but are also reflected at a linguistic level through the multiple layers of flower imagery. The traditional song acts as the outer floral border of the garden, framing the mutable rose at its centre. There is a marked contrast between the parts of the song based on the poem and those which are elements of the traditional song, both of which form part of Rosita's dialogue. If the poem of the mutable rose represents Rosita's true emotions and suffering in raw, somatic terms, then the more symbolic, typified aspects of the song are indicative of her stifling future as an artificial

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<sup>31</sup> Nickel, pp. 522–23.

<sup>32</sup> Valis, p. 255.

flower drained of passion and youth. In Act Two, the Housekeeper criticises the Uncle's obsession with his flowers, insisting that 'lo único que sirven las rosas es para adornar las habitaciones' (p. 253).<sup>33</sup> The irony is that this is Rosita's fate. She is doomed to become 'mansa, sin fruto, sin objeto, cursi...', a decorative flower which withers and dies without bearing new fruit, a spectre compared to the lushness of the real mutable rose.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike the agency which the poem gives Rosita in terms of personal expression, the song's restrictive symbolism, particularly in terms of colour, reduces the possibilities of a language of flowers to pre-determined codes. It is Rosita herself who recites these symbols: 'Las amarillas son odio; el furor, las encarnadas; las blancas son casamiento y las azules, mortaja' (p. 269).<sup>35</sup> These limited, generic colour symbols stand in stark contrast to the rich, haptic values of redness and whiteness in the poem. The vast range of floral motifs – such as 'heliotropo', 'flor de albahaca', 'violeta', 'rosa blanca', 'jazmín', 'clavel', 'jacinto', 'pasionaria', 'jaramago', 'lirio', 'nardo', 'madreselva', 'siempreviva', 'calambuca', 'dalia', and 'la gala de Francia' (pp. 267–69) – and their corresponding abundance of implicit colours and sensory values also invest the song with a level of superficiality that stands in relief to the primacy of the core image of the poem.<sup>36</sup> However, this aspect of the language of flowers serves a different purpose. It reflects the contrast between Rosita and the Spinster sisters and their mother, whose excess is suggested in their costume and in the superficiality of their concerns with social appearances and fashionable clothing: '¡Cuántas lágrimas, cuántas tristezas por una cinta o un grupo de bucles! (p. 258)'.<sup>37</sup> This palette of purple, red, white, and yellow flowers mixes heady, carnal, earthy, and sweet scents, adding to our impression of

<sup>33</sup> 'The only thing which roses are good for is to decorate rooms'.

<sup>34</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 724. 'Placid, fruitless, pointless, *cursi*...' *Cursi* refers to 'a person who pretends to be elegant or refined without success' or 'a thing with the appearance of elegance or wealth which is pretentious and tasteless' according to the RAE. I discuss the idea of *cursilería* in more depth later in this chapter.

<sup>35</sup> 'Yellow ones are hate; rage, the reddish/pinkish ones; white ones are marriage and blue ones, a shroud.'

<sup>36</sup> 'Heliotrope, basil-flower, violet, white rose, jasmine, carnation, hyacinth, passion flower, mustard flower, iris, tuberose, honeysuckle, houseleek, Santa María tree flower, dahlia, and garden balsam or touch-me-not'. The RAE defines calambuco as a North American tree with white, scented flowers and round fleshy fruit.

<sup>37</sup> 'So much tears and sadness for a ribbon or a cluster of ringlets!'

these gaudy, flamboyantly dressed characters and reinforcing the ostentatious visual image of their '*inmensos sombreros de plumas malas, trajes exageradísimos, guantes hasta el codo con pulseras encima y abanicos pendientes de largas cadenas*' (p. 255).<sup>38</sup> The potency of these mental images is diluted by its range of possible colours and textures, providing a weaker counterpoint to the concentrated haptic values of red and white in the poem and the experiences they conjure up in the sensory imaginary. In the traditional elements of the song we must really stretch ourselves to 'see' the colours and get a sense of texture and scent as none of these associations are explicit, which provides a real challenge in performance when the dialogue must compete with the visual staging. However, this is precisely the point. Rosita is the flesh-and-blood rose who expresses herself through one floral image and with a greater depth of feeling. In contrast, the Spinsters are artificial flowers focused on appearances, who only seem to be able to communicate through this typified, symbolic language of spinsterhood which has little sensory and affective power due to its range of superficial images. The Spinsters, who are also referred to as '*las tres cursilonas*', explicitly introduce the theme of '*cursilería*', which has connotations of tackiness, over-sentimentality, tastelessness, and kitsch.<sup>39</sup> However, Valis argues that Lorca gives the concept of '*cursilería*' 'symbolic weight as the sign of women's sexual and emotional frustration and lack of freedom'.<sup>40</sup> This is not a play which merely mocks the pretensions of the advancing middle class. Rather, it is, as Lorca himself tells us, a tragedy, a drama of repressed and desperate women in great emotional pain: '*es la tragedia de la cursilería española y provinciana*' and

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<sup>38</sup> 'Huge hats with gaudy feathers, extremely exaggerated dresses, elbow-length gloves with bracelets on top and fans hanging from long chains'. This depiction reminds us of Belisa's mother in *Don Perlimplín* who appears in '*una gran peluca dieciochesca llena de pájaros, cintas y abalorios*' (p. 267) as part of Lorca's aim of blending of the lyrical and the grotesque in this play. 'A big eighteenth-century wig full of birds, ribbons, and glass beads'. These ostentatious costumes create bourgeois caricatures which revel in their 'grotesqueness'. However, unlike Belisa's mother, the Spinsters are as much an object of pity as one of ridicule due to their stultified and restricted lives in which they struggle to maintain social appearances despite their growing poverty. These women are already the '*cosa grotesca y conmovedora*' which Lorca tells us that Rosita is fated to become, (*Prosa I*, p. 723). 'That grotesque and moving thing'.

<sup>39</sup> 'The three *cursilonas*'.

<sup>40</sup> Valis, p. 253.

‘[un] drama de la cursilería española, de la mojigatería española, del ansia de gozar que las mujeres *han de reprimir por fuerza en lo más hondo de su entraña enfebrecida*’.<sup>41</sup> The image of ‘fevered insides’ echoes Lorca’s illusion to Rosita as ‘requemada por dentro’ and strengthens my reading of Rosita’s inner redness, on the one hand, and the pink and white of her costume on the other. The language of flowers offers Rosita a way of trying to express this burning inner reality through bodily evocations of colour which appeal to the sensory imaginary, yet at the same time she is perpetually re-defined and forced back into her role as the rose despite visual and corporeal contradictions in the form of her pink costumes and human body. Through his sensory, colourful exploration of floral imagery Lorca makes the poetic symbol of the rose and the theme of *cursilería* flesh in the characters of Rosita and the Spinster sisters in order to communicate the tragic fate of ‘todas las doñas Rositas de España’.<sup>42</sup>

In *Mariana Pineda*, Lorca brings the poetic symbols and themes to the material stage through the motif of the yellow quinces in Act One, and by reflecting the central colour images of the *estampa* and the lithograph settings throughout the play in Mariana’s costumes and in the lighting. Whilst the sensory values of object colour are important in *Doña Rosita*, in *Mariana Pineda* this engagement is much more explicit in the visual staging, the actions of the characters, and the dialogue. The senses were a key consideration for Lorca. In his lectures on ‘La imagen poética de Don Luis de Góngora’ [The Poetic Image of Don Luis de Góngora], given between 1926 and 1930, he stressed that ‘un poeta tiene que ser profesor en los cinco sentidos corporales [...] en este orden: vista, tacto, oído, olfato y gusto’.<sup>43</sup> An appeal to the senses is also part of Lorca’s creation of a humanised poetry which emphasises

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<sup>41</sup> *Palabra de Lorca*, p. 349 and p. 443. My emphasis. ‘The *tragedy* of provincial and Spanish *cursilería*’, ‘a drama of Spanish *cursilería*, of Spanish prudishness, of the desire that women *have to repress by force in the deepest part of their feverish insides*’.

<sup>42</sup> *Palabra de Lorca*, p. 444. ‘All the Doñas Rositas of Spain’.

<sup>43</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 241. ‘A poet has to be professor of the five senses [...] in this order: sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste’.

the corporeality of his characters and uses the somatic as a means of translating inner expression: '[los personajes] han de ser tan humanos [...] que se aprecien sus *olores* y que salga a los *labios* toda la valentía de sus palabras llenas de amor o de *ascos*'.<sup>44</sup> Lorca's most sustained engagement with the sensory capacities of object colour in *Mariana Pineda* is found in his exploration of the implicitly yellow quinces throughout Act One. Whilst McDermid has commented on Lorca's creation of a broader sense experience in this play and on the olfactory and gustatory values of the quinces, I argue that colour is also a key part of this sensory depiction, especially Lorca's blending of the visual and non-visual senses.<sup>45</sup> In *Mariana Pineda*, Lorca uses the material staging much more effectively in his creation of an embodied theatre of poetry, inspiring the sensory imaginary through the visual realm as well as through verbal prompts. Mark's work on how audiovisual media capture haptic experiences offers ways of considering how Lorca creates an embodied experience through the visibility of the staging. Marks's concept of 'haptic visibility' considers the haptic and the optic as a constant flow instead of separate phenomena, and seeks to re-establish vision as an embodied experience.<sup>46</sup> Unlike the filmic image, the medium of theatre appeals more explicitly to the senses due to the close contact between the audience and the sensory experiences represented on stage. These sense experiences are not restricted to touch in *Mariana Pineda*. Rather, Lorca uses the staging in Act One to create an embodied visibility which works with the dialogue to appeal to and to reinforce the spectators' memories of the real sense experiences in order to evoke textures, tastes, and smells through a non-interactive medium.

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<sup>44</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 730. My emphasis. 'The characters have to be so human [...] that you can *smell* them and all the bravery of their words full of love or *disgust* reaches their *lips*'.

<sup>45</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 43.

<sup>46</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. xi. Marks focuses on the communication of the senses in intercultural cinema, including the role of memory. She argues that often 'the sensorium is the only place in which cultural memories are preserved' and explores how artists 'stretch' the cinematic apparatus 'to represent their precious, and often nonaudiovisual, sensory memories', (*The Skin of the Film*, pp. 195–96). Marks finds that 'for intercultural artists it is most valuable to think of the skin of the film not as a screen, but as a membrane that brings its audience into contact with the material forms of memory', (*The Skin of the Film*, p. 243).

Throughout Act One of *Mariana Pineda*, Lorca appeals to all of our senses through the visual abundance of the quinces in the staging and his portrayal of the characters' sensory experiences. In the opening stage directions there are quinces in a crystal bowl on the table, whilst others hang from the entire ceiling, creating a powerful image of a clustering of yellow, given their shapes and their solidness: '*Sobre una mesa, un frutero de cristal lleno de membrillos. Todo el techo estará lleno de la misma fruta, colgada*' (p. 102).<sup>47</sup> In Scene Two, Lorca combines the visual impact of the quinces with Amparo's experience of their taste, inspiring our sensory imaginary:

*Amparo coge un membrillo y lo muerde.*

LUCÍA (*enfadada*) ¡Estáte quieta!

AMPARO (*habla con lo agrio de la fruta entre los dientes*) ¡Buen membrillo!

*Le da un calofrío por lo fuerte del ácido, y guiña* (p. 106).<sup>48</sup>

We see Amparo touch and bite the yellow quince; perhaps we hear or imagine hearing the sound as her teeth penetrate the skin and juice squirts out. The bitterness of the fruit is clear from her reaction; Amparo praises the taste of the quince – '¡Buen membrillo!' – yet at the same time its acidity affects her in bodily ways. Like other juxtapositions in the play – such as the beauty of Mariana's neck, which is also the site of her horrific death – Amparo's experience of the yellow quinces is contradictory and complex as it hovers on the brink between pleasure and disgust, joy and melancholia. The 'agrio' taste of the quinces is reinforced by their colour, which is evocative of sharpness like the yellowness of lemons. The combination of these visual prompts appeals to the spectator's sensory imaginary by evoking

<sup>47</sup> 'On a table, a glass fruit bowl full of quinces. The same fruit hangs from the entire ceiling'.

<sup>48</sup> *Amparo picks up a quince and bites into it.* LUCIA (angrily) 'Sit still!' AMPARO (*speaking with the bitterness of the fruit between her teeth*) 'Delicious quince!' *The acidity of the fruit makes her shudder and she grimaces.* Quinces are a very popular fruit in Spain, especially in the form of *membrillo* which is a thick, sweet, pink-red jelly usually eaten with cheese. A cross between an apple and a pear in appearance, the quince is green when ripening and yellow when ready to be picked in the autumn. It is very unusual to eat quinces raw due to their sharp, bitter taste; they are generally used for cooking. Thus this act is reflective of Amparo's impulsiveness and her playful, daring nature.

real experiences of bitter tastes. The sensory appeal of the quinces is extended to the olfactory in Fernando's dialogue and in the stage directions of the final act. As Fernando enters the house he exclaims: '*¡Cómo me gusta tu casa! Con este olor a membrillos*' (p. 116) and Lorca reinforces this verbal reference in the staging of the final scene of the Act when '*el fino y otoñal perfume de los membrillos invade el ambiente*' (p. 135).<sup>49</sup> The 'autumnal' scent of the quinces perpetuates the bitter sweetness of the act and creates a sense of things coming to an end. Whilst Mariana's friends Amparo, Lucía, and Fernando are firmly rooted in the material realm – engaging with the tastes and smells of the quinces – Mariana is wilting and dying, fading in body and costume like Rosita. Lorca's use of 'invade' also suggests the dominance of this yellow scent; this smell of quinces overpowers human agency and subjects the body to an intense stimulation which blocks other experiences. Lorca's aim of literally filling the stage with the smell of quinces, combined with their visual abundance and Fernando's emphasis on their scent as he arrives, simultaneously captures the vivacity of the other characters and suggests an oppressive, heady atmosphere which mirrors Mariana's feelings of claustrophobia and of being watched. Far from a decorative element, the yellow quinces play a key role in conveying the bittersweet, ominous atmosphere of the Act and in creating a bodily theatre of poetry which extends linguistic imagery and symbolism to the visual realm.

The second core way in which Lorca embodies poetic themes and symbols on stage in this play is through his use of colour in terms of set, costume, and lighting. Both McDermid and Zardoya have observed how Lorca makes full use of the different aspects of the theatrical medium, suggesting that he 'integrates speech, music, light, colour, settings and even smells to generate a sensorially holistic theatre work'<sup>50</sup> and that 'colores, formas, movimientos, gestos y palabras se integran en una unidad totalizadora, en una síntesis en que caben todos

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<sup>49</sup> 'How I love your house! With this smell of quinces', 'the fine and autumnal perfume of the quinces invades the atmosphere'. When ripe, usually in the autumn, the quince fruit has a strong, pleasant scent.

<sup>50</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 40.



los ingredientes teatrales' respectively.<sup>51</sup> However, colour in *Mariana Pineda* is not simply an element of Lorca's creation of a theatrical synthesis or a secondary part of his theatre of poetry. Rather, it is a central component and one of the factors which brings these aspects together through its complementary visual and verbal forms. Object colour is an important part of how Lorca transports the two-dimensional images of the *estampa*, a print or engraving, and the lithograph to the three-dimensional stage. Lorca uses the colours of Mariana's costumes and the lighting to reflect or contrast with the colours of the settings which evoke these plastic forms. In the prologue, Lorca describes the stage as '*encuadrada en un margen amarillento, como una vieja estampa, iluminada en azul, verde, amarillo, rosa y celeste*' (p. 98).<sup>52</sup> The 'yellowish' border of the scene invests the play with a visual sense of age which is reflective of the colour of old paper, an image which is also found in Lorca's description of Mariana's dress as '*un amarillo de libro viejo*' (p. 143) in Act Two, Scene One.<sup>53</sup> This suggestion of age reminds us that even in the prologue, set in 1850, the events of *Mariana Pineda* are already in the past. Indeed, McDermid notes that the printing process is 'more antique than [...] the photographic recording of an event' and therefore adds a greater sense of temporal distance to the action of the play.<sup>54</sup> The yellow frame also acts as an anti-mimetic device, drawing our attention to the theatrical and illusory nature of the medium. As

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<sup>51</sup> Zardoya, p. 489. 'Colours, forms, movements, gestures and words are integrated in a totalising unity, a synthesis in which all the theatrical ingredients fit together'.

<sup>52</sup> 'Framed in a yellowish border, like an old print, lit up in blue, green, yellow, pink, and sky blue'.

<sup>53</sup> 'An old-book yellow'.

<sup>54</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 44. He argues that Lorca's fascination with bringing the two-dimensional to life in his theatre of poetry is also reflected in his use of 'cuadros' to structure *Don Perlimplín*, *Así que pasen*, *El público*, *Bodas de sangre*, and *Yerma*. Whilst 'cuadro' can refer to a scene, it is also a 'painting', a 'frame', or a 'tableau'. Indeed, in *Mariana Pineda* the *estampa* takes on the qualities of a *tableau vivant*, 'where actors momentarily maintain a certain pose to produce a static image, for effect', (*Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 44). For example, in Act One, Scene Eight: '*Mariana se sienta en una silla, de perfil al público, y Fernando junto a ella, un poco de frente, componiendo una clásica estampa de la época*' (p. 127), and during Mariana's meeting with Pedro and the Conspirators in Act Two, Scene Seven: '*unos se sientan y otros quedan de pie, componiendo una bella estampa*' (p. 157). 'Mariana sits in a chair, with her profile to the audience, and Fernando next to her, a little to the front, creating a classic print of the era', 'some sit and others remain standing, creating a beautiful print'. McDermid observes that throughout his theatre Lorca demonstrates 'a profound interest in the relationship between the fixed, still image – the print, the tableau, the photograph – and the unstationary, live representation of the theatre piece' which recurs in *Mariana Pineda*, *Don Perlimplín*, *El público*, *Así que pasen*, *Bodas de sangre*, *Yerma*, and *Bernarda Alba*, (*Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 74).

I discussed in my Introduction, Jean Cocteau suggests that ‘poetry of the theatre’ should be a ‘coarse lace, a lace of ropes’ in which all the elements of the staging should be boldly displayed like the rigging of a ship, or, as Lorca proposes, like the bones beneath the clothing.<sup>55</sup> The yellow frame, which should be a consistent part of the set throughout the production, and the yellow light of the prologue, are echoed in and reinforced by other aspects of the staging: the quinces in Act One, Mariana’s costume in Act Two, and the ‘*inmenso arco de flores amarillas y plateadas de papel*’ (p. 199) which frames the Our Lady of Sorrow statue at the convent in Act Three, Scene Seven.<sup>56</sup> These visual instances of yellow are supported by verbal colour in the dialogue, for example Mariana’s two references to yellow flowers and Pedro’s allusions to yellow fever (p. 151) and ‘*las viejas torres amarillas*’ (p. 158).<sup>57</sup> The luminous colours of the *estampa* set in the prologue are also mirrored in the green and pink light as the play reaches its climax in Act Three, Scene Nine:

*Toda la escena irá adquiriendo, hasta el final, una gran luz extrañísima de crepúsculo granadino. Luz rosa y verde entra por los arcos, y los cipreses se matizan exquisitamente, hasta parecer piedras preciosas. Del techo descende una suave luz naranja, que se va intensificando hasta el final* (pp. 208–09).<sup>58</sup>

The pink, green, and orange light, combined with the burnished ‘precious stone’ appearance of the cypress trees, creates a powerful display of colour which grows in intensity throughout the scene, adding to the golden light that appears from Act Three, Scene Seven. Lorca’s use of light in this Act – combined with the phantasmagorical, trembling topaz and amethyst

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<sup>55</sup> Cocteau, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Huge arch of yellow and silvery paper flowers’.

<sup>57</sup> ‘The old yellow towers’.

<sup>58</sup> ‘The cypresses become tinted with golden light’, ‘the whole scene gradually acquires a strong, strange Granadan twilight until the end. Pink and green light enters through the arches, and the cypresses become exquisitely tinged, until they look like precious stones. A soft orange light descends from the ceiling, which grows in intensity until the end’. This majestic influx of light is also reflected in the dialogue in the final scene when the First Novice cries: ‘Ya no verán tus ojos las naranjas de luz que pondrá en los tejados de Granada la tarde’ (p. 211). ‘Now your eyes will no longer see the oranges of light which the evening sets down on the rooftops of Granada’.

candle light in Act Two, Scene Seven – comprises his most varied engagement with luminous colour in his theatre. Lorca often uses coloured light in his plays: pink in *El maleficio de la mariposa* (1920), gold in *Don Perlimplín*, orange and green in *La zapatera*, blue in *El público* (1930), *Así que pasen cinco años* (1931), *Bodas de sangre*, and *Yerma*, and silver, also in *El público*. The less mimetic colours such as blue, green, and silver often have a dream-like or eerie effect, moving towards a ‘blissful’ representation of colour, as explored in my discussion of *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two. Bliss, or *jouissance*, is an unsettling detail, a sharp shock like a pinprick. It can also have orgasmic or explosive values. Some of these colours – pink, gold, and orange – can be attributed to sunlight or sunset. However, Lorca’s use of adjectives such as ‘*fantásticamente*’ to describe the pink light in *El maleficio* (p. 94) and his general description of the lighting in Act Two of *Don Perlimplín* as ‘*mágica*’ (p. 303) as Perlimplín dies suggests a more meliorative, transformative effect which is more in line with the rich variety of the ‘*extrañísima*’ (p. 208), ‘*maravillosa*’, and ‘*delirante*’ (p. 211) coloured light in the final scene of *Mariana Pineda*.<sup>59</sup> There is, of course, a symbolic level to this coloured light as in all three of these works the central protagonist has just died or, in Mariana’s case, is about to die. Robert Havard refers to this rainbow of light as a reversal of the darkening process throughout the play and ‘the flooding light of salvation’.<sup>60</sup> He sees this scene as ‘one of [Lorca’s] finest theatrical sequences’ and comments on Lorca’s creation of ‘an extremely pure climax, more uplifting than chilling, in which poetry fuses with the plastic elements of stagecraft to powerful and emotional effect’.<sup>61</sup> Instead of the gritty reality of Mariana’s garrotting, we are left with the glittering, natural beauty of Granada and a glimpse into a sublime realm. However, these instances of coloured light also mark the climax of each

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<sup>59</sup> ‘Fantastically’, ‘magic’, ‘extreme strangeness’, ‘marvellous’, ‘delirious’. These descriptions of light remind us of Lorca’s conflation of poetry and magic in the prologue of *La zapatera* when he laments the current state of Spanish theatre: ‘la poesía retira de la escena en busca de otras ambientes donde la gente no se asuste de que un árbol, por ejemplo, se convierte en una bola de humo’ (p. 182). ‘Poetry retires from the stage in search of other environments where people are not frightened when, for example, a tree turns into a puff of smoke’.

<sup>60</sup> Havard, ‘*Mariana Pineda*’, p. 63.

<sup>61</sup> Havard, ‘*Mariana Pineda*’, p. 63.

play, representing an orgasmic explosion of colour that does have more disruptive, sensual values and which creates a grand finale of coloured light as the plays come to a close. In *Mariana Pineda*, there is also a second moment of transportation: that of the audience being moved back to reality. The pink and green light in this final scene echoes that of the prologue when the *estampa* aesthetic is first introduced, creating a visual epilogue as we leave the world of the *estampa* and return through the yellow frame from 1831 to 1850 to the present day.

The colours of the *estampa* and the lithograph are also embodied in Mariana herself. Like Rosita, Mariana is the incarnation of the poetic themes of the play, and both corporeal colour and object colour are central to this aspect of Lorca's theatre of poetry. Lorca's declaration that he wanted to '*vestir [la historia] de poesía en la palabra y de emoción en el silencio y en las cosas que lo rodean*' in *Mariana Pineda* echoes the importance of the material presentation of his characters and their '*trajes de poesía*' through which we can see the inner reality of bones-and-blood.<sup>62</sup> For McDermid, Lorca's statement means that 'the stage character should be the physical materialisation of the poetic story', an aspect of Lorca's theatre of poetry which we see in his visual portrayal of Mariana.<sup>63</sup> Zardoya suggests that colour is the guiding force beyond Lorca's carefully chosen costumes in *Mariana Pineda* and that '*siempre tiene en cuenta el papel que [el color del vestuario] ha de representar dentro del cuadro cromático general de la escena y [...] la correlación que ha de guardar con el espíritu del personaje*'.<sup>64</sup> Mariana metaphorically reflects the yellow frame of the *estampa* in bodily ways. In Act One, Scene Eight she tells Fernando: '*me estoy poniendo amarilla como la flor del romero*' (p. 132), a verbal instance of colour which is materialised in her costume

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<sup>62</sup> *Prosa 1*, p. 612. My emphasis. '*To dress [history] in poetry in the word and in the emotion found in silence and the things that surround it*'.

<sup>63</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 74.

<sup>64</sup> Zardoya, p. 490. '[Lorca] always bears in mind the role that [the colour of the costume] must represent in the general colour scheme of the scene and [...] the correlation which it must have with the spirit of the character'.

in the following Act. Mariana also personifies the visual framing of Act Two, in which Lorca describes the set as '*entonación en grises, blancos y márfiles, como una antigua litografía*' (p. 140).<sup>65</sup> This bleaching of colour is reflected in the whiteness of Mariana's skin, particularly references to her neck, and in her white costume in the final act. However, Lorca also uses the colours of Mariana's costumes to capture the contrast between the yellow frame and various luminous colours of the *estampa* and the more austere, achromatic lithograph. When the lithograph image is introduced at the beginning of Act Two, Clavela is recounting a ballad to Mariana's two children about a young girl embroidering a red flag for the Duke of Lucena, a story which eerily evokes Mariana's own activities. When Mariana enters the scene in her faded, book-yellow costume, she provides a marked contrast to the grey, white, and marble tones of the lithograph set and interrupts the chromatic unity of the scene. Indeed, there are very few examples of explicitly hued costumes in the play apart from Mariana's. Her adoptive mother Doña Angustias '*viste de oscuro*' (p. 102); Fernando wears a white shirt; the first three Conspirators have '*amplias capas grises*' (p. 155); and Lorca describes Pedrosa as '*vestido de negro*' in both Act Two, Scene Nine, and Act Three, Scene Six (p. 169 and p. 194).<sup>66</sup> The contrast of Mariana's pale mauve and yellow dresses against the costumes of the other characters singles her out as the flesh-and-blood version of the *estampa* in Acts One and Two. By Act Three, she has been transformed into the bleached incarnation of the monochrome lithograph, now a faded spectre against the luminous *estampa* colours that resurge in the lighting of the final act.

Object colour is also an important part of the rich and often startling metaphorical language of the play. The quality of the dialogue of *Mariana Pineda* has often been called

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<sup>65</sup> 'Grey, white and marble tones, like an antique lithograph'. Lorca's use of '*entonación*' implies both an artful application of colour and a subtly differentiated range of shades, which is emphasised by his use of plural colour nouns and by his very specific differentiation between 'white' and 'marble' tones. The use of 'marble' also evokes a very material depiction of colour which appeals to our sense of touch with its hard, smooth, and cold values. The process of lithography relies on the absorption and repulsion of coloured ink and water, and is suggestive of the mobile values of colour.

<sup>66</sup> 'Dressed in dark clothing', 'wide grey cloaks', 'dressed in black'.

into question. Greenfield suggests that critics and biographers have generally seen the play as ‘excessively melodramatic and much handicapped by dramatic commonplaces and static, superficial characterizations’.<sup>67</sup> However, Havard warns against ‘the simplistic equation often made between Romanticism and shallow or immature emotionalism’, particularly as Lorca did not share this view and praised Romantic drama in a 1935 interview.<sup>68</sup> Havard refutes the idea that there is ‘too much poetry for the good of its dramatic effect’, contending that ‘the main threads of poetic imagery are necessary and effective in terms of creating the play’s mood and promoting its themes’.<sup>69</sup> Far from lacking in depth, the language of *Mariana Pineda* corresponds to Lorca’s artistic vision in his theatre of poetry, like the language of flowers in *Doña Rosita*. In several interviews in 1927, the year the play premiered, Lorca clearly states that his use of romantic clichés is deliberate, and that they serve a key purpose in the aesthetic of the play: ‘¿Que hay tópicos y trucos? ¡Claro! Como que componen bien en mi técnica de estampas escénicas’.<sup>70</sup> Beyond Lorca’s engagement with the tropes of

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<sup>67</sup> Greenfield, ‘The Problem of *Mariana Pineda*’, pp. 754–55. Lorca had his own doubts about this work, describing it in 1929 as ‘[una] obra débil de principiante, y aun teniendo rasgos de mi temperamento poético, no responde ya en absoluto a mi criterio sobre el teatro’, (*Prosa I*, p. 374). ‘A weak, beginner’s work which, although it has traces of my poetic temperament, no longer corresponds in any way to my theatrical criteria’. Lorca’s brother Francisco also tells us: ‘Yo creo que *Doña Rosita*, escrita con grandes precauciones, vence el fracaso íntimo de *Mariana Pineda*’, ‘Prólogo a una trilogía dramática’, *FGL: Boletín de Federico García Lorca*, 7.13 (1993), 205–28, (p. 219). ‘I think that *Doña Rosita*, written with great caution, overcame the private failure of *Mariana Pineda*’. In a 1933 interview, the year the play premiered in Buenos Aires, Lorca seemed to change his mind about *Mariana Pineda*, at least in order to promote this new production, and praised the ways in which the play encapsulated his view of theatre as the fusion of emotion and poetry: ‘El caudal de una verdadera poesía que fluía natural y constantemente, no sólo de los personajes, sino del ambiente que les rodea [...] de *Mariana Pineda* éste es el concepto que más me satisface’, (*Prosa I*, p. 613). ‘A river of true poetry which flowed naturally and constantly, not only in the characters, but in the atmosphere around them [...] this is the concept in *Mariana Pineda* which satisfies me the most’.

<sup>68</sup> Havard, ‘*Mariana Pineda*’, p. 46. Lorca stated ‘del teatro romántico no queda nada. Y esa es la desgracia de la escena española’, (*Prosa I*, p. 676). ‘Nothing remains of Romantic theatre. And this is the disgrace of the Spanish stage’.

<sup>69</sup> Havard, ‘*Mariana Pineda*’, p. 53. Reed Anderson also defends the lyricism of *Mariana Pineda*. He argues that Lorca had a ‘keen awareness of the possibilities and limitations of this form’, as shown by the ways he contrasts ‘the detailed naturalism of the stage’ with ‘the artificiality of the verse dialogue’, thus creating a tension between reality and artificial spectacle, (p. 70).

<sup>70</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 490. ‘Of course there are clichés and tricks! They work well within my technique of *estampas* for the stage’. There is what Havard calls a ‘conscious artistry’ in the lyricism and ‘deliberate cliché’ of *Mariana Pineda*, (*Mariana Pineda*, p. 64). Lorca tells us that he borrowed selectively from the Romantic tradition to suit his vision of the play: ‘He utilizado algunos [tópicos] – no todos los que quisiera – que le iban al ambiente de la obra a su carácter romántico, poco ironizado...’, (*Prosa I*, p. 490). ‘I’ve used some romantic clichés – not all those I wanted – which complemented the atmosphere of the work and its romantic character with little irony’.

Romanticism and the creation of an effusive, elaborate discourse, there are multiple other effects of these remarkable colour images which demonstrate the importance of this seemingly typified language in Lorca's theatre of poetry. For example, in Amparo's account of the Ronda bullfight in Act One, Scene Four (pp. 112–13), Lorca creates a sensory world of object colour which brings the experience to life, so we can mentally re-create the *corrida*, and emphasises Mariana's remoteness from the material world. Like Amparo's sensory experience of the yellow quinces in this scene, her account of the bullfight suggests an engagement with life and with reality which stands in stark relief to Mariana's sequestered existence, first behind the walls of her house and later imprisoned in the convent. Indeed, we never see Mariana outside except in the walled garden of the convent.

Amparo's story is replete with rich depictions of object colour which enhance our re-picturing of this 'real-life' experience. Zardoya draws our attention to the abundance of colours in this passage, suggesting that 'su riqueza es tal que sugiere, a través de la palabra viva, un verdadero cuadro de fuertes tintes goyescas'.<sup>71</sup> However, she fails to acknowledge the sensory possibilities of these depictions. The colours and textures of the costumes – 'abanicos redondos bordados de lentejuelas', 'anchos sombreros grises', and '[un] traje color manzana bordado de plata y seda' – are combined with the smell of blood with its implicit redness and the majestic image of the 'toros de azabache con divisa verde y negra', creating a powerful evocation of Amparo's experience which appeals to the sensory imaginary.<sup>72</sup> Her portrayal of the bullfighter as 'una gran mariposa de oro con alas bermejas' captures the grace and beauty of his movements, and the labile, glittering motion of the colours of his

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<sup>71</sup> Zardoya, p. 494.

<sup>72</sup> 'Round fans embroidered with sequins', 'wide grey hats', '[an] apple-coloured suit embroidered with silver and silk', 'the jet bulls with green and black ribbons'.

costume, which is a traditional *traje de luces* with detailed brocade and sequins.<sup>73</sup> This sense of colour-in-motion enriches our mental picture of the event, adding a sense of movement to the visual and the sensory. This speech is important because it explicitly represents the world of life and the senses which Mariana has become withdrawn from, as emphasised by Amparo's repeated reference to the absence of 'mi triste amiga, mi Marianita Pineda'.<sup>74</sup> As Amparo re-creates the bullfight for Mariana and for the audience, there is a strong sense of disconnection between Mariana, and us, and the outside world, a detachment that is tinged with grief and which foreshadows her impending death. The surreal image of the square spinning like 'un zodiaco de risas blancas y negras', which blends sound and colour, points to a more macabre reading of the bullfight in which the finely dressed, colourful crowd becomes peopled with monochrome spectres laughing ghoulishly at the bloodshed, and the perspective of our mental image becomes dizzying and claustrophobic.<sup>75</sup> The ritualised killing of the glorious jet-black bulls foretells the garrotting of Mariana's beautiful white neck and her role as a sacrifice for the Liberal cause, a contrast which is reflected in the white-and-black colours of the laughter. Havard has commented on 'the bearing which tauromachy has on Mariana's plight' as indicated in the 'fatalism', 'implicit beauty', and 'violent sacrifice' of these images,<sup>76</sup> whilst Edwards reads the bullfight as a 'prophetic' spilling of blood.<sup>77</sup> Through object colour imagery in Amparo's account of the bullfight, Lorca continues to build up the contrast between Amparo's zest for life and Mariana's decline, and foreshadows

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<sup>73</sup> 'A great golden butterfly with auburn wings'. A 'traje de luces' or 'suit of light' is 'a silk costume used by bullfighters which is embroidered with gold, silver, or jet, and sequins' according to the RAE. For a discussion of bullfighting in Lorca's work see Maria Hernández, 'El deseo y la tauromaquia en Federico García Lorca y Almodóvar: ¿Género, ideología o fuerza irracional?', *Romance Review*, 12 (2002), 59–67, and Allen Josephs, 'Picasso, Hemingway, and Lorca: Toreo as a Modernist Principle', *North Dakota Quarterly*, 76.1-2 (2009), 90–98. See also Xon de Ros's work on Lorca's poem about the death of his bullfighter friend in *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* (1934), including 'Ignacio Sánchez Mejías Blues', in *Crossing Fields in Modern Spanish Culture* ed. by Federico Bonaddio and Xon de Ros (Oxford: Legenda, 2003), pp. 81–91.

<sup>74</sup> 'My sad friend, my little Mariana Pineda'.

<sup>75</sup> 'A zodiac of white-and-black laughter'.

<sup>76</sup> Havard, 'Mariana Pineda', p. 55.

<sup>77</sup> Edwards, *Theatre Beneath the Sand*, p. 32.



Mariana's execution, whilst creating potent, sensory images in our mind's eye through the markedly rich, visual nature of his colour-writing.

These rich mental images also hint at another, more fantastical plane which lies beyond material reality. McDermid suggests that this is the dream-world of death, '[which] is continually breaking into reality', and that as her closeness to death increases so does 'the presence of the other world [that] pervades her existence'.<sup>78</sup> Equally, these depictions communicate Mariana's struggle between reality and fantasy, particularly in Act Three when she temporarily retreats into illusion and madness, unable to face the truth of her abandonment. The ways in which Lorca combines abstract nouns with concrete colour properties – such as the more explicit 'pez de plata [que] finge rojo sueño' (Amparo, p. 109) and 'zodiaco de risas blancas y negras' (Amparo, p. 112), and the colour associations implied by 'el silencio me pesa mágicamente. Se agranda como un techo de violetas [...]' (Mariana, p. 186) – adds a surreal, oneiric dimension to our mental images, particularly due to the suggestion of 'magic'.<sup>79</sup> However, Lorca's creation of a fantastical, multi-sensory world of object colour in the dialogue of *Mariana Pineda* is most powerful in textual form as the process of mental re-creation is very much a readerly process. In performance Lorca's lush verbal colours lose their potency where they do not also appear in the stage directions in some form. Some of these mental pictures problematize considerations of staging. Whilst stageability, surprisingly, was not always Lorca's main concern – in 1930 he admitted that he

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<sup>78</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 51–52. McDermid proposes that Mariana's 'preoccupation with something intangible that lies beyond her physical sphere is notable from the earliest scenes of the drama'. For example, in Act One, Scene Six, Lorca tells us that Mariana is '*inquieta por algo que ocurre fuera de la escena*' (p. 111). 'Troubled by something happening outside the scene'. Havard has also commented on Mariana's 'curious intermediate state, partially dissociated with the world' in the final Act, which is full of reference to death, sleep, and 'morbid hallucinations', (*Mariana Pineda*, p. 62).

<sup>79</sup> 'A silver fish which feigns red sleep', 'a zodiac of white-and-black laughter', 'the silence weighs down on me magically. It grows bigger, like a roof of violets [...]'. Indeed, many of the colour metaphors in *Mariana Pineda* evoke the playful, surprising language of *Así que pasen cinco años*, including the Old Man's description of 'memory' as '*una palabra verde, jugosa*' (p. 166) and the Cat's '*voz de plata*' (p. 181), problematizing the critical view that *El público*, *Así que pasen*, and Act Three, Scene One of *Bodas de sangre* comprise Lorca's only engagement with Surrealism in his theatre. 'A juicy green word', 'silver voice'.

did not know if *El público* ‘será muy representable en el orden material’ due to the horse characters – some of his verbal colour images pose even greater problems due to their abstract nature, although attempts could be made to evoke ‘red sleep’ and ‘black-and-white laughter’ through lighting and smoke effects.<sup>80</sup> Unlike references to white, which are represented by Mariana’s skin and her costume in the final Act, and to yellow, which are reflected in the sets and Mariana’s costume in Act Two, many of these innovative mental pictures remain only oral-aural. This is compounded by the fact that in performance the text is more ephemeral in spoken form unless emphasised by constant repetition and these mental images must also compete with the concrete reality of the staging. The sensory possibilities of the ballad of the bullfight are also much less effective than that of the yellow quince motif; too much imagination is required without visual direction. In *Mariana Pineda* the effect of many of the more complex and creative instances of mental colour are greatly reduced, if not lost altogether.

The idea of poetry made flesh in the colours of the central protagonists’ costumes in my discussions of *Mariana Pineda* and *Doña Rosita* is also an important part of Lorca’s theatre of poetry in *Don Perlimplín* and *La zapatera*, particularly in terms of the metamorphosis of a stock puppet figure into a more human, visceral character which embodies the poetic themes of the work. Lorca subtitles *Don Perlimplín* as an *aleluya*, a type of popular comic strip with religious origins that was based on stock characters.<sup>81</sup> From the mid-nineteenth century these characters included the figure of Don Perlimplín, who was

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<sup>80</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 503. ‘Will be possible to represent in material terms’.

<sup>81</sup> McDermid defines the *aleluya* as ‘a type of popular cartoon strip, principally enjoyed by, though not aimed at, children, and often sold at fairs or markets. Originating in the in the eighteenth century as paper prints of holy images, the *aleluya* developed into a cartoon strip, occasionally recounting the lives of saints, but more often depicting popular stories with a range of standard heroes. The figure of Don Perlimplín as a protagonist in these cartoons first emerged in the mid-nineteenth century’, (*Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 69-70). See also Margarita Ucelay, ‘Introducción’, in Federico García Lorca, *Amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín*, ed. by Margarita Ucelay, 9th edn (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2010), pp. 9–232 (pp. 13–17).

traditionally depicted as ‘feo, bajo, jorobado y chato’, according to Margarita Ucelay.<sup>82</sup> The aesthetic of *Don Perlimplín* has proved problematic for critics due to its unusual perspectives and disconcerting visual elements in the staging, such as the green-and-black set, Perlimplín’s golden antlers, the flocks of black paper birds, and the dining room table with a ‘primitive’ Last Supper painted on the surface. In Scene Two, Lorca complicates this presentation further by describing the perspectives as ‘*deliciosamente equivocadas*’.<sup>83</sup> Wright has argued that the greater part of the play can be read as a dream space in which ‘a gap is inserted between the representation and the reality it depicts’, creating a world of visual trickery and disruptive perspectives.<sup>84</sup> The unsettling visual effects of *Don Perlimplín* can also be seen as the material embodiment of the *aleluya* as indicated in the subtitle, part of Lorca’s creation of what Delgado calls a ‘patently synthetic’ and ‘two-dimensional, pseudo-cartoonish world’.<sup>85</sup> In his theatre of poetry Lorca makes the *aleluya* flesh through his playful experimentation with the material staging in ways which startle and galvanise the audience. Whilst Lorca draws on an established popular form, the discomfiting juxtaposition of ‘aleluya’ and ‘erótica’ in the play’s subtitle points to a uniquely Lorquian vision of this traditional form in his theatre of poetry, in which he sought to ‘subrayar el contraste entre lo grotesco y lo lírico y aun mezclarlos en todo momento’.<sup>86</sup> The result is a work which consistently surprises us in terms of plot and staging, making full use of the startling effects of the visual realm.

McDermid argues that during the course of the play Perlimplín undergoes a transformation from a stock *aleluya* figure to a character of bones-and-blood as he gains

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<sup>82</sup> Ucelay, *Amor de Don Perlimplín*, p. 20. ‘Ugly, short, hunch-backed, and snub-nosed’. Margarita is the daughter of Pura Ucelay, who worked closely with Lorca and staged the premiere of this play in a double bill with *La zapatera* in 1933.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Deliciously distorted’.

<sup>84</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 45.

<sup>85</sup> Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 66.

<sup>86</sup> *Prosa 1*, p. 532. ‘To highlight the contrast between the lyrical and the grotesque and blend them at every moment’.

agency and imagination.<sup>87</sup> This central change is reflected in the colours of the set, props, and costumes. In the prologue and Scene One, Perlimplín's character is firmly rooted in the *aleluya* puppet figure or the stock Golden Age types of the old man unsuitably married to a young girl and the cuckolded husband seeking to restore his honour. This fixed representation is reinforced by his green costume in the prologue and by his elaborate golden antlers in Scene One. Ucelay sees the green of Perlimplín's frock coat and the green walls and black furniture of the set in the prologue as representative of the typical colours of the *aleluya*: black ink on green paper.<sup>88</sup> Her comparison between the black furniture of the prologue and the black ink and stark outlines of the *aleluya* is also fruitful. These bold outlines are further reflected in the surreal image of '*una bandada de pájaros de papel negro*' (p. 271) in the staging at the end of the prologue, which also refer back to the original materials of the *aleluya*.<sup>89</sup> However, there are problems with Ucelay's reading of green as evoking the *aleluya*, particularly as Ucelay herself notes that white and yellow paper was also used.<sup>90</sup> In his 2011 study of the *aleluya* Antonio Martín suggests that in the nineteenth century the traditional white background gave way to a wide range of colours including yellow, blue, red, orange, and violet '*para captar mejor la atención y el interés de los niños*', casting doubt on Ucelay's interpretation of green in *Don Perlimplín* as specifically representative of this medium.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, the parallel which Ucelay makes between Perlimplín's green coat and the Spanish idiom '*viejo verde*' or '*dirty old man*' is much more persuasive due to

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<sup>87</sup> See McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 74–79.

<sup>88</sup> Ucelay describes the green walls as '*color de pliego de aleluya*' and argues that '*la fuerte impresión visual en verde y negro del decorado y el traje de Don Perlimplín responde también al color del papel de aleluyas*', (*Amor de Don Perlimplín*, p. 24). '[The] colour of the *aleluya* paper', 'the strong visual impression of green and black of the décor and Don Perlimplín's costume also correspond with the paper colour of the *aleluyas*'.

<sup>89</sup> 'Flock of black paper birds'. This image recurs at the end of Scene One (p. 286), although in this instance their colour is not specified.

<sup>90</sup> '[La aleluya] queda restringid[a] [...] a la combinación exclusiva de dos colores; a saber, negro-verde, o negro-amarillo, o negro-blanco', (*Amor de Don Perlimplín*, p. 44). 'The *aleluya* is restricted to the exclusive combination of two colours; namely black-green, or black-yellow, or black-white'.

<sup>91</sup> See Antonio Martín, 'Las aleluyas, primera lectura y primeras imágenes para niños en los siglos XVIII-XIX. Un antecedente de la literatura y la prensa infantil en España', *Estreno*, 47 (2011), no pagination. <<https://webs.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero47/aleluya.html>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

the established association.<sup>92</sup> We can thus see Perlimplín's role as the inappropriately old husband, a typical trope of the Golden Age *entremés* and *novela ejemplar*, reflected in the colours of his costume.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, it is these stock Golden Age roles rather than the *aleluya* figure which are most explicitly reflected in Perlimplín's visual presentation.

The most significant example of this portrayal of object colour as the manifestation of Perlimplín as a stock Golden Age figure is represented by his ostentatious golden antlers in Scene One, which emphasise the poetic theme of infidelity in the material staging. When the Duendes pull back the curtain after Perlimplín and Belisa's wedding night, Lorca tells us in the stage directions that Perlimplín '*aparece [...] en la cama con unos cuernos dorados de ciervo en la cabeza*' (p. 283).<sup>94</sup> The 'cuernos de ciervo' draw on the long-standing association between wearing horns and being cuckolded, as found in the use of the Spanish idioms 'poner los cuernos', 'llevar los cuernos', or 'sufrir el cuerno' to signify marital infidelity. Lorca's specific use of 'cuernos de *ciervo*' rather than other types of animal horns still captures the popular expression of unfaithfulness. However, the effect is much more exaggerated due to the multi-horned form and the size of the antlers, complementing the play's 'distorted' perspectives and exaggerated costumes, for example Belisa's Mother's wig which is adorned with beads and birds. It also adds a sense of comedy to the scene due to their ridiculousness, a joke in which the audience is complicit at Perlimplín's expense. Lorca's gilding of the antlers – which is reinforced even further by the influx of golden light – maximises the visual excess

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<sup>92</sup> Ucelay proposes that Perlimplín's green coat combined with the green walls 'nos sugieren la amarga denominación de viejo verde', 'Federico García Lorca y el Club Teatral Anfístora: el dramaturgo como director de escena', in *Lecciones sobre Federico García Lorca: Granada, Mayo de 1986*, ed. by Andrés Soria Olmedo (Granada: Comisión Nacional de Cincuentenario, 1986) pp. 49–64 (p. 44). 'Suggests the bitter denomination of dirty old man'.

<sup>93</sup> The *entremés* was a one-act comic sketch performed during the interlude of the main play. The *novelas ejemplares* [Exemplary Tales] were a series of short novels published by Cervantes in 1613.

<sup>94</sup> 'Appears [in the bed] with golden antlers on his head'. Often Perlimplín is depicted as wearing horns, including wing-shaped ones in John Cobb's 2015 production at the Southwark Playhouse, London, huge curved ones in Allison Rose Lloyd's staging at the Muhlenberg College New Visions Directors Festival in 2014, and even large wooden ones protruding from a Viking helmet in the Portuguese television version starring Heitor Lourenço and Melânia Gomes in 2009. However, other productions have been more faithful to Lorca's specific reference to 'cuernos de *ciervo*', such as Andrés Zambrano's adaptation at La Guarida Colonial House, Cuenca, in 2018, although here they seem to lose their crucial golden colour.

of this portrayal. Even though our assumption that Belisa has been unfaithful has not been subverted, Lorca confirms the ‘truth’ in exaggerated visual ways. However, this is a play where nothing is at it seems, full of skewed perspectives and startling moments, a work which delights in ‘the potential deceptiveness of the visual medium’ as Wright observes.<sup>95</sup> Do the ostentatious golden antlers suggest that the interpretation of Perlimplín as an impotent cuckold is too simple, too obvious? Is this an example of the visual trickery that Wright identifies, making the joke at our expense? John Lyon sees the golden antlers as ‘the visual confirmation of our prejudice’, forming part of Lorca’s aim of disturbing his audience and jolting us ‘into a broader view of morality’ whilst ‘systematically frustrating the expectations [Lorca] has tempted [us] to formulate’.<sup>96</sup> Lorca suggested somewhat ambiguously:

Don Perlimplín es el hombre menos cornudo del mundo. Su imaginación dormida se despierta con el tremendo engaño de su mujer; pero él luego hace cornudas a todas las mujeres que existen.<sup>97</sup>

McDermid suggests that Perlimplín ‘becomes both cuckold and cuckolder’ due to his creation of a new identity as the Young Man in the Red Cape.<sup>98</sup> Perlimplín’s suicide then cruelly snatches the Young Man away from Belisa, however deliberately, and leaves her confused and betrayed by her husband, ‘cornuda’ in a different sense. Via the visual emphasis on the golden antlers, Lorca sets up, then dismantles, the Golden Age storyline, highlighting the moment in which our expectations of the old husband becoming a cuckold are seemingly

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<sup>95</sup> Wright, *The Trickster Function*, p. 44.

<sup>96</sup> Lyon, pp. 239–40.

<sup>97</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 532. ‘Don Perlimplín is the least cuckolded man in the world. His dormant imagination is forced awake by the massive deception of his wife; but then he makes cuckolds out of all the women that exist’. The play thus becomes the ‘tragedia grotesca’ of a man who is ‘español y calderoniano; pero no quiere reaccionar calderonianamente’, (*Prosa I*, p. 529). ‘The grotesque tragedy of a man who is Spanish and Calderonian; but doesn’t want to act in a Calderonian way’.

<sup>98</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 85.

fulfilled before they give way to an alternative vision and a more equivocal and human portrayal.<sup>99</sup>

McDermid argues that Lorca's reference to the play as 'teatro de monigotes humanos' reflects this fleshing out of Perlimplín's character through his theatre of poetry as 'by providing an interiority of bones and blood, the poet gives depth, a third dimension, to a planar surface representation'.<sup>100</sup> The red velvet cape and the implicitly green emerald dagger are the agents of Perlimplín's transformation, reflecting his transition chromatically in terms of costume and props. McDermid emphasises that Lorca's version of Perlimplín represents 'a very important development from the stock [*aleluya*] character' as the red cloak gives him the means to hide his grotesque body and take on a new role, therefore 'offer[ing] him a mask of dignity and the means to transform his identity'.<sup>101</sup> By putting on the red velvet cloak Perlimplín steps away from both the stock *aleluya* figure of ridicule and the Golden Age stereotypes as he becomes the driver of the play's plot; he is now a character of 'bones-and-blood' rather than a 'puppet' manipulated by Marcolfa and Belisa. It is Belisa who has the red cape in Scene One; she drapes it over the shoulders of her elaborate lace nightgown and Perlimplín covers her with '*un manto rojo*' (p. 286) at the end of the scene following his grief-stricken epiphany.<sup>102</sup> By covering her in the red cape/blanket Perlimplín foreshadows Belisa's 'transformation' at the end of the play when she is soaked in his blood: 'Belisa, ya eres otra mujer... Estás *vestida* por la sangre gloriosísima de mi señor' (Marcolfa, p. 303).<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> John Lyon sees Perlimplín as having an ambiguous, mutating identity which continually undermines our initial impression of him as a stock figure. Lyon suggests that Perlimplín can be seen as equally motivated by the desire to teach Belisa the value of the spiritual over the carnal, the search for a release from the torment of Belisa's body, the rejection of judgemental social standards, and sadistic revenge for infidelity, (pp. 241–42).

<sup>100</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, pp. 74–75. The original Lorca quote is in *Prosa I*, p. 529. 'Theatre of humanised puppets'.

<sup>101</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 76.

<sup>102</sup> 'A red blanket'.

<sup>103</sup> 'Belisa, you are now another woman. You are *dressed* in the most glorious blood of my lord'. My emphasis. For Marcolfa, who has become embroiled in Perlimplín's fantasy, this is a moment of sacred transformation. However, we are also witness to the confusion of a young girl who is soaked in her husband's blood, which points to the multi-faceted nature of the play and the central interplay between the lyrical and the grotesque.

The multiple explicit mentions of the blood-red cape in the dialogue complement its material appearance and are an ominous indication of Perlimplín's bloody death in Scene Three. If the red velvet cloak is one of the tools of Perlimplín's metamorphosis, then the other is the emerald dagger which makes his transformation complete in Scene Three. The 'puñal de esmeraldas' (p. 302) drives the play's resolution as the weapon with which Perlimplín stabs himself, simultaneously killing his alter-ego – the admirer – and instigating his own death.<sup>104</sup> As McDermid notes, the emerald dagger is far more than a prop. Rather, it is 'highly ornamental [...] and symbolic' and has an important performative function.<sup>105</sup> Perlimplín's description of the murder weapon as '[un] ramo ardiente de piedras preciosas' (p. 302) captures the luminous quality of the green jewels, reminding us of the precious stone appearance of the cypress trees in the final scene of *Mariana Pineda*.<sup>106</sup> This description of the emerald dagger adds to the chromatic and sensory richness of this scene: the soft red velvet cape, the hard, cold emeralds and the sharpness of the blade, and the warm, sticky redness of Perlimplín's actual spilled blood. Although the characters do not engage with the sensory aspects of these object colours like with the quinces in *Mariana Pineda*, Lorca appeals to the sensory imaginary by reflecting the tactile qualities of velvet, jewels, and blood in the material staging, creating an embodied visuality. Like the red cloak, the dagger is present in both the staging and the speech of this critical scene: it is mentioned twice in Perlimplín's dialogue and he shows Belisa 'el puñal clavado en el pecho' (p. 302) as he reveals his true identity and removes the cape.<sup>107</sup> Whilst the moment of Perlimplín's stabbing occurs offstage, the visual image of the dagger protruding from his chest emphasises the embodied dimension of the scene further, evoking the punctum as I explored in Chapter Three. Through his suicide and his immersion in blood Perlimplín permanently becomes the

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<sup>104</sup> 'Emerald dagger'.

<sup>105</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 96.

<sup>106</sup> 'This burning branch of precious stones'.

<sup>107</sup> 'The dagger stuck in his chest'.



Young Man, as emphasised by Marcolfa's declaration that 'ahora le amortajaremos con el rojo traje juvenil' (p. 303) and by Belisa's confusion: 'Pero ¿dónde está el joven de la capa roja?' (p. 304).<sup>108</sup> McDermid sees the reference to the emerald dagger as 'ardiente', as representative of 'the destructive and cleansing properties of fire', as it 'ends Perlimplín's physical life', suggestive of another level of transformation.<sup>109</sup> First the puppet becomes flesh, then the character of bones-and-blood is reformed into a new identity which can only exist in fantasy and memory as Perlimplín's body is stripped back to what lies beneath: the ephemeral and unquantifiable essence of the human soul which no longer exists in the material world.

In his comparison of Lorca's treatment of love, imagination, and society in *Don Perlimplín* and *La zapatera*, Lyon suggests that both these plays encompass Lorca's concern with creating a self-conscious, theatrical quality.<sup>110</sup> Andrew Anderson has a similar view of *La zapatera*, emphasising the importance of Lorca's theatre of poetry in any reading of the play, particularly in the ways that he uses stylisation to de-realise the spectating experience through music, patterned language, humour, character types, and self-conscious theatricality.<sup>111</sup> Anderson sees the Shoemaker's Wife as a fully fleshed-out character rather than a puppet figure. He suggests that she is 'a highly particularised, vividly *brought to life* example of that stock person and she is endowed with features which transcend the standard repertoire of the type'.<sup>112</sup> As with Perlimplín, Lorca elevates the Shoemaker's Wife from the puppet or stock figure to a character of bones-and-blood with a complex emotional

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<sup>108</sup> 'Now we will bury him with that youthful red cloak', 'But where is the young man in the red cape...?'

<sup>109</sup> McDermid, *Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 86. McDermid proposes that the dagger thus releases Perlimplín from 'the mask that the young man was'. In contrast, the blood which Belisa is 'dressed' in is indicative of 'the adoption of another mask of layer or identity', (*Love, Desire and Identity*, p. 87).

<sup>110</sup> Lyon, p. 236. Lyon argues that these plays are unique in terms of the ways that Lorca draws on his experiments with the puppet play genre to 'seek the same kind of spontaneous response while attempting to expand audience awareness and unsettle it'. However, he warns us that neither are categorised as such although they make use of the 'deliberate schematization of character, the stylisation of action, and the pruning of lyrical foliage in the dialogue' which are typical of the puppet play genre.

<sup>111</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: La zapatera prodigiosa*, pp. 101–02.

<sup>112</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: La zapatera prodigiosa*, p. 41. My emphasis.

interiority. Whilst Perlimplín undergoes a transformation during the play, the Shoemaker's Wife is already a fully developed character even before she comes on stage; we can hear her shouting offstage during the prologue and making furious demands as Lorca blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality. The Shoemaker's Wife stands in marked contrast to the other characters of the play, whom Anderson describes as 'depersonalised', 'mechanical', and 'puppet-like'.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, whilst Lyon has commented on her husband's transformation during the play,<sup>114</sup> Lorca himself tells us that the Shoemaker's Wife is the only true character:

Los demás personajes le sirven en su juego escénico sin tener más importancia de lo que la anécdota y el ritmo del teatro requiere. No hay más personaje que ella y la masa del pueblo que la circunda con un cinturón de espinas y carcajadas.<sup>115</sup>

Don Mirlo is a prime example of this contrast as Lorca juxtaposes his monochrome, jerky character with the Shoemaker's Wife's passion and vivacity. Don Mirlo's 'blackbird' character is embodied in his costume, reflecting the verbal colour associations in his visual portrayal: '*Viste de negro, frac y pantalón corto* (p. 205)'.<sup>116</sup> Lorca accentuates this portrayal further in his bobbing movement: '*Le tiembla la voz y mueve la cabeza como un muñeco de alambre* (p. 205)'.<sup>117</sup> The anti-mimetic, stylised Don Mirlo is not a character of bones-and-blood like the Shoemaker's Wife, but rather a puppet without an inner dimension. In contrast, the Shoemaker's Wife is a protagonist who represents universal concerns and is a visceral, complex character brought to life by Lorca's theatre of poetry.

One of the ways in which Lorca makes the Shoemaker's Wife a character of bones-and-blood is through material colour, especially in her costumes, which complement and

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<sup>113</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: La zapatera prodigiosa*, p. 97.

<sup>114</sup> Lyon, p. 236.

<sup>115</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 481. 'The other characters complement her in terms of staging without having any more importance than that which anecdote and theatrical rhythm require. There are no other characters except her and the masses of the town which circle her with a belt of thorns and cruel laughter'.

<sup>116</sup> 'He is dressed in black, frock coat and short trousers'.

<sup>117</sup> 'His voice trembles and he moves his head like a puppet moved by strings'.

contrast with the dialogue, the set, and the movements of the characters. In an interview before the 1930 premiere Lorca emphasises the importance of colour in terms of costume and characterisation:

[Son] escenarios y figurines míos. Son cosas, la concepción y el ambiente, tan unidos a los tipos, sus trajes, sus colores, que es casi imposible surja una compenetración entre el que los confecciona y el autor que los ha visto moverse y vivir mientras corría la pluma.<sup>118</sup>

For Lorca, the characters, costumes, and colours were so deeply interconnected that he insisted on designing the sets and outfits himself so that he could fully capture the atmosphere of the play and his material vision of the characters. Anderson suggests that the ‘flamboyant’ and ‘colourful’ costumes are ‘determinedly anti-realistic’, enhancing Lorca’s theatre of poetry in which we can see the coarse lace, the rigging, the bones-and-blood.<sup>119</sup> This is particularly important in terms of the central protagonist. In the authorial prologue Lorca refers to the Shoemaker’s Wife as ‘[una] criatura *poética* que el autor *ha vestido de zapatera*’ (p. 182), which is deeply suggestive of his aim of creating characters of bones-and-blood dressed in ‘trajes de poesía’ as part of his vision of a theatre of poetry.<sup>120</sup> The Shoemaker’s Wife’s passionate, lively personality is reflected in her personified red and green costumes. As the curtain rises, the Shoemaker’s Wife ‘*viene de la calle toda furiosa y se detiene en la puerta. Viste un traje verde rabioso y lleva el pelo tirante, adornado con dos*

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<sup>118</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 497. ‘The sets and costumes are mine. They are things, the conception and the atmosphere, that are so much a part of the characters, their costumes, their colours, that it is almost impossible for an understanding to emerge between the person that makes them and the author that has seen them move and live whilst his quill sped across the page’. When Lorca speaks of the ‘colour’ of *La zapatera* as secondary, he is referring to ‘local colour’ and the Andalusian idioms in the dialogue, suggesting that the play has a universal appeal: ‘El color de la obra es accesorio y no fundamental como en otra clase de teatro [...] La palabra y el ritmo pueden ser andaluces, pero no la sustancia’, (*Prosa I*, p. 531). ‘The colour of the work is secondary and not fundamental like in other types of theatre [...] The words and rhythm can be Andalusian, but not the substance’.

<sup>119</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: Yerma*, p. 57.

<sup>120</sup> ‘A *poetic* creature which the author *has dressed* as a Shoemaker’s Wife’. My emphasis.

*grandes rosas* (p. 185).<sup>121</sup> In his description of her costume, Lorca invests the greenness of her dress with human qualities, seeking to capture the depth of the Shoemaker's Wife's emotions in her clothing and bring her inner reality to the stage in material form, what Edwards sees as 'the visual statement of the youth and aggression of her character'.<sup>122</sup> The Shoemaker's Wife's costume in Act Two adds to this depiction, when she appears in '*un traje rojo encendido, con amplias faldas y los brazos al aire*' (p. 215).<sup>123</sup> Both 'rabioso' and 'encendido' are indicative of anger. However, 'rabioso' also implies violence, particularly due to its associations with the dangerous and uncontrollable behaviour of rabid animals, whilst 'encendido' has the additional connotations of luminosity or a literal burning. Unlike the visceral attack on the body in *El público*, Kay García suggests that the physical violence of *La zapatera* is rooted in comedy and exaggeration, reflecting the combination of violence and farce in the play's subtitle. Instead, García sees Lorca's use of costume colour as indicative of what she calls 'aesthetic violence', the use of bold colours and visual effects, as I discussed in my analysis of body and costume colour in *El público* in the previous chapter. García observes that the 'violent green' of the Shoemaker's Wife's dress 'assaults the eye' as she enters the stage; it is a raging green which 'reflects her interior fury'.<sup>124</sup> Whilst Anderson sees the change of her costumes from 'budding (green)' to 'flowering (red)' as indicative of the Shoemaker's Wife achieving greater maturity, both costumes can be seen as the visual representation of her inner passion and fiery temper, an exposure of what lies beneath the surface, and the materialisation of the poetic theme of the play's subtitle as a 'violent farce' in three-dimensional form.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> 'Comes in furiously from the street and stops in the doorway. She is wearing a rabid, furious green dress and wears her hair in a tight up do, adorned with two big roses'. This green reminds us of the Friend's fan and the First Mask's dress in *Así que pasen*, which Lorca describes as 'rojo agresivo' (p. 188) and 'amarillo rabioso' (p. 239) respectively. 'Aggressive red', 'rabid yellow'.

<sup>122</sup> Edwards, *Dramatists in Perspective*, p. 92.

<sup>123</sup> 'An angry, burning red dress, with wide skirts and bare arms'.

<sup>124</sup> García, p. 204.

<sup>125</sup> Anderson, *García Lorca: La zapatera prodigiosa*, p. 58.

This visual portrayal of anger, which would be challenging to convey by colour alone, is emphasised by the Shoemaker's Wife's movements and by her dialogue. She slams doors, slaps her forehead, stamps her feet, and is always bursting into tears or flying into a rage. In the stage directions, Lorca describes the Shoemaker's Wife as '*enfurecida*' (p. 186), '*saliendo furiosa*' (p. 194), '*hecha una furia*' (p. 197), '*fiera*' (p. 197 and p. 217), and '*estallando furiosa*' (p. 225).<sup>126</sup> In terms of her discourse, we find reflections of my discussion of the 'sharp' or 'knife-like' speech of Bernarda in *Bernarda Alba*, as the Shoemaker's Wife's dialogue is full of exclamations, imperatives, and insults, and is supported by violent bodily gestures. In contrast to the contradiction between Bernarda's 'colourful' speech and her obsession with material whiteness, the Shoemaker's Wife's abrasive dialogue is mirrored in her visual appearance through the 'loud' and striking colours of her costumes. The juxtaposition of the Shoemaker's Wife's costumes with the set also imbues the vibrant colours of her dresses with a startling impact which complements her movements and her speech. Both Acts are set in the Shoemaker's Wife's house which Lorca tells us is a sparse white with grey accents, a precursor to the staging in Act Three, Scene Two of *Bodas de sangre* and all three sets in *Bernarda Alba*: '*Habitación completamente blanca [...] El foro es también una habitación blanca con algunas puertecitas y ventanas en gris*' (p. 185).<sup>127</sup> The visual contrast between the white walls and the colours of the Shoemaker's Wife's dresses, compounded by '*una suave luz naranja de media tarde*' (p. 185) in Act One, is not as unexpected as the intrusions of colour in the 'photographic documentary' aesthetic of *Bernarda Alba* which I explored in Chapter Two.<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless the parallel is striking, building on the disconcerting metatheatrical prologue which ended with a stream of water shooting out of the green glow of the author's top hat. This aesthetic violence is enhanced further by the Shoemaker's Wife's bold movements, including her

<sup>126</sup> 'Infuriated', 'entering in a fury', 'furiously', 'fierce', 'exploding in fury'.

<sup>127</sup> '[A] completely white room [...] The background is also white with some small doors and windows in grey'.

<sup>128</sup> 'A soft, orange mid-afternoon light'.

dance in Act One, which invest colour with mobile qualities. This is a play rooted in motion, a work that Lorca described as ‘casi un “ballet”’ and ‘musical [...] la música está en el ritmo de los movimientos, del diálogo que a veces termina, naturalmente, en canto’.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, in his 1933 staging of the play with Lola Membrives, Lorca added five additional songs and dances from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rather than the polka dance in the 1930 ‘chamber’ version.<sup>130</sup> The unexpected interruptions, exaggerated visual stylisation, and the inclusion of song and dance help Lorca to ‘desrealizar la escena y quitar a la gente la idea de que “aquello está pasando de veras”’.<sup>131</sup> This portrayal of colour-in-movement is also emphasised by the chorus of female neighbours, who are defined by the material colours of their clothing rather than being given individual names: Red Neighbour, Purple Neighbour, Black Neighbour, Green Neighbour, and Yellow Neighbour.<sup>132</sup> At the end of Act One the neighbours descend on the Shoemaker’s Wife, who has just learned of her husband’s departure:

*Por la puerta empiezan a entrar vecinas con trajes de colores violentos y que llevan grandes vasos de refrescos. Giran, corren, entran y salen alrededor de la zapatera*

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<sup>129</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 592 and p. 598. ‘Almost a “ballet”’, ‘musical [...] The music is in the rhythm of the movements, of the dialogue which sometimes finishes, naturally, in song’. Delgado notes that viewers of the Membrives production of *La zapatera* hoped to see it transformed into a ballet with La Argentinita, who played the Butterfly in the premiere of *La zapatera prodigiosa*, (*Federico García Lorca*, p. 64). Lorca’s fascination with bodily movement is reflected in the many dance adaptations of his plays, including Lluís Pasqual’s flamenco version of *Mariana Pineda* (Teatro Calderón, Madrid, 2003); Carlos Saura’s ballet film version of *Bodas de sangre* (1981); and dance versions of *Yerma* by J. Marks (1965), Carmen Cortés (1998), and Cristina Hoyos (2003).

<sup>130</sup> Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 62. This second version of *La zapatera* came to the Teatro Coliseum in Madrid in March 1935. Lorca tells us that ‘en realidad, su verdadero estreno es en Buenos Aires, ligado con las canciones características del XVIII y XIX y bailada por la gracia extraordinaria de Lola Membrives con el apoyo de su compañía’, (*Palabra de Lorca*, p. 205). ‘In reality, its real premiere is in Buenos Aires, linked to the typical eighteenth- and nineteenth-century songs and danced with the extraordinary grace of Lola Membrives with the support of her company’.

<sup>131</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 481. ‘To de-realize the scene and rid people of the idea that “this is really happening”’.

<sup>132</sup> The Red Neighbour’s daughters are defined in the same blanket terms: ‘*La acompañan sus hijas vestidas del mismo color*’ (p. 192). ‘She is accompanied by her daughters dressed in the same colour’.

*que está sentada gritando, con la prontitud y ritmo de baile. Las grandes faldas se abren a las vueltas que dan* (p. 213).<sup>133</sup>

The colours of the neighbours' costumes serve several critical purposes in this scene. First, Lorca's description of their dresses as 'trajes de colores violentos' has a double meaning, referring to the connotation of 'violento' as 'loud' or 'garish' as a colour qualifier and linking back to the Shoemaker's Wife's 'furious' green dress. These 'colores violentos' recur in the Shoemaker's *historia de ciego* near the end of Act Two (p. 233). Rather than developed characters in their own right, the neighbours act as visual complement to the Shoemaker's Wife. Secondly, the dance creates a whirl of red, purple, black, green, and yellow circling around the weeping Shoemaker's Wife with her green dress, all against the white background of the set, greatly enhancing the visual contrast established at the beginning of the Act. This influx of colour fills the stage, dazzling and unsettling the audience and acting as a grand visual finale to Act One. Throughout *La zapatera* Lorca uses material colour to reflect the Shoemaker's Wife's personality in physical form, bringing the stock puppet to life through his bold and stylised theatre of poetry.

Throughout these four plays Lorca makes poetry flesh in his theatre of poetry via the medium of object colour. Through the colours of costumes, sets, props, and lighting, Lorca embodies the central themes and motifs of these works – the mutable rose, the *estampa*, the distorted *aleluya*, and the violent farce – in the physical staging in diverse and impactful ways which communicate key character experiences and transformations and challenge and stimulate the audience. The success of this material manifestation of poetic themes and emotions lies in the visual reflection of the verbal elements; even when images or colours are

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<sup>133</sup> 'Female neighbours dressed in loud colours and carrying large glasses of drink begin to enter through the door. They turn, run, come and go around the Shoemaker's Wife, who is sat wailing, with the rapidity and rhythm of a dance. Their big skirts open up as they spin around.' Absolute Theatre's 1998 staging at the Festival de Almada in Lisbon made full use of the bright colours and full skirts depicted in Lorca's stage directions. See <<http://www.absolutetheatre.co.uk/?p=237>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

made explicit in the dialogue acts of mental re-creation cannot compete with the transient, visual nature of the live performance. Some instances – the sensory possibilities of the language of flowers in *Doña Rosita* and the unusual verbal metaphors in *Mariana Pineda* – are lost or overwhelmed when staged. However, other aspects of these plays which are reflected in the dialogue, the actors' movements, and the multiple aspects of the staging, such as the mutable rose (*Doña Rosita*), the yellow quinces and the *estampa* (*Mariana Pineda*), the green frock coat, golden antlers, emerald dagger, and the red velvet cloak (*Don Perlimplín*), and the violence of the Shoemaker's Wife's fury (*La zapatera*), reach their full potential in physical form.



## Conclusion

As I have demonstrated throughout my thesis, Lorca's colour practice exceeds and troubles purely symbolic readings and instead colour reveals itself to be a psychological, bodily, and inherently material force. From the affective impact of colour and the raw expression of individual suffering, to the colours of the body and the materialisation of poetic motifs, colour is a central element of Lorca's theatre of poetry. This was Lorca's concept of a democratic and emotive theatre which aimed to stimulate and surprise the audience and expose the visceral pain of the everyday public. Part of this transference of poetry from page to stage was the representation of key linguistic images, themes, and emotions in the physical staging and a holistic aesthetic vision which drew on a diverse range of artistic influences and, in some works, extended a core image to all of the aspects of the production. Lorca's theatre of poetry has sometimes led to a limited critical focus on the use of verse in his theatre. Critical understandings of these ideas have been muddled further by Lorca's brief yet complex statements on the matter, as I discussed in my analysis of his theatre of poetry in my Introduction. My in-depth readings of each of Lorca's completed plays through the lens of colour studies offers a methodology for tackling these ideas in ways which also provide a fuller understanding of his colour-work.

In this thesis I explored how a reading of material and affective colour in Lorca's theatre sheds light on his theatre of poetry, especially his communication of the pain of the characters, his use of both visual colour (in the stage directions) and verbal colour (in the dialogue), and his aim of stimulating and surprising his audience. I also problematized understandings of Lorca's colour-work that have only focused on conventional symbolic connotations. As my Introduction revealed, current scholarship on Lorca's use of colour tends to focus on traditional symbolic recuperations, on his poetic output, and on his sexuality and

subjectivity. It also rarely engages with Lorca's rich and varied experimentation with implicit colour; the idea that colour can be inherent rather than directly articulated. I have emphasised the need for critics to consider Lorca's colour practice in ways which recognise but move beyond symbolic values and which offer a more in-depth understanding of his varied and striking evocation of the chromatic throughout his theatre. I have also stressed the importance of considering Lorca's theatre as a whole rather than dividing his plays along stylistic or temporal lines, as such categorisations restrict and narrow the possibilities of his colour-work and undervalue his poetic vision and imagination. My focus on colour as the lens through which to examine these ten plays reveals Lorca's craft as well as his aesthetic and emotional engagement with the idea of a theatre of poetry. I have demonstrated that each of Lorca's plays is part of his sustained experimentation with bringing poetry to the stage, both in terms of the play we read and the visual qualities of the productions, and that colour is a key element within this exploration. Colour has been revealed to be a unifying force which encompasses dialogue, sets, props, costumes, lighting, and characterisation. My reading has opened up perspectives on the experiential nature of colour, and has stressed the importance of an interdisciplinary approach which draws on visual theory, material culture, literary criticism, queer theory, and cultural studies. Over the course of this thesis I have examined different facets of colour in Lorca's theatre of poetry: the ways in which colour sparks and reflects characters' mental states (Chapter Two), the role of bodily recuperations of colour in terms of Lorca's exploration of character subjectivities and of implicit colours (Chapter Three), and the importance of object colour in terms of the materialisation of poetic themes and motifs (Chapter Four). Whilst each of these analytical chapters had a different focus – the psyche, the body, and the object – the affective and material qualities of Lorca's colour practice continually overlapped within each discussion.

In Chapter Two, I probed the psychological currency of colour in *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936), which revealed powerful and complex reactions to colour on the part of the protagonists. Due to Bernarda's conflation of material whiteness with honour and hued colour with dishonour, she responds in extreme ways to intrusions of hued colour which threaten the ascetic white façade of her house. Here I drew on David Batchelor's reading of chromophobia, the hatred and paranoia surrounding hued colour, to probe Bernarda's visceral, exaggerated reaction to Adela's red-and-green fan in Act One. Whilst intrusions of colour such as Adela's fan cause Bernarda to react in ways which are indicative of chromophobia, in contrast Adela desires colour and is filled with anxiety and horror by the deathly whiteness of the house. I discovered that these competing and overlapping forces of colour were mirrored in the dialogue through silence, flatness, negation, and sparseness, on the one hand, and through verbal references to colour, emphatic gestures, exclamations, and colloquialisms on the other. However, my discussion revealed that Bernarda's dialogue is both 'white' and 'colourful', indicative of more ambivalent feelings which are suggestive of the inner complexity of Lorca's characters and of the multi-faceted effect of colour on the psyche. The materialisation of poetic themes was also shown to be important in my discussion of *Bernarda Alba*, as Lorca uses the colours of the setting to reflect Bernarda's mental state and to capture the central conflict between Bernarda and Adela in physical form. As well as the central theme of honour, the motif of imprisonment – such as the 'bricking up' of the house, the five chains, the 'glass cabinet' metaphor, and references to the oppressive heat which permeate the dialogue – is mirrored in the setting. The visual monotony of the white house is reinforced further by the silence, the lack of light, the thick walls, the distant external sounds, and the barred windows. The combined effect of this sensory deprivation is a disquieting and claustrophobic whitescape which is the material counterpart of Bernarda's disturbed state of mind. As well as the unnerving impact of this oppressive white space on the

audience, instances of hued colour are revealed to have an explosive effect due to their attempted occlusion, their scarcity, and their supposed impossibility in a black-and-white photographic documentary. Inspired by Roland Barthes's discussion of *jouissance*, I found that hued colour is thus invested with a blissful quality which reflects the intensity of Adela's sexual desire. Bliss constitutes an important part of my discussions of colour affect in the subsequent chapters in the sense of its orgasmic, disruptive quality.

My analysis of Lorca's other plays in Chapters Three and Four showed Lorca's sustained preoccupation with character subjectivities, the reciprocity of key images in the dialogue and in the staging, and the impact of colour on the audience throughout his theatre. In Chapter Three, I examined the role of colour and corporeality related to Lorca's ideas of a poetry 'made human' in *El maleficio de la mariposa* (1920), *Mariana Pineda* (1925), *Amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (1925), *El público* (1930), *Así que pasen cinco años* (1931), *Bodas de sangre* (1932), and *Yerma* (1934). Through my exploration of the trope of female whiteness in *El maleficio*, *Mariana Pineda*, *Don Perlimplín*, and *Bodas de sangre*, which took the overlapping forms of the virginal, the dying, and the erotic, I discovered that the symbolic connotations of whiteness belied a much more ambivalent and complex portrayal, as we saw in *Bernarda Alba*. Rather than traditional, romanticised depictions of women, what my analysis revealed instead was a visceral portrayal of suffering which is metaphorically inscribed on the female body and which has significant ramifications in terms of its chromatic output. This discourse was especially important in *Bodas de sangre*, in the Bride's and the Mother's dialogue, and in *Yerma*, where the colours implied by references to blood and milk continually reinforce the experience of maternity which Yerma has been cruelly denied. Whilst colour bliss was an important part of my exploration of colour affect in the previous chapter, here I was influenced by Carol Mavor's reading of the residual capacity of the punctum sparked by the filmic image. I argued that these somatic

portrayals of female emotional pain had a lingering ‘bruising’ impact on the audience which in turn has chromatic implications. We saw this bruising effect recur in Rosita’s dialogue in *Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje de las flores* (1935), which I explored in Chapter Four. Indeed, the visceral portrayals of human suffering throughout Lorca’s theatre, particularly in the plays *Bodas de sangre*, *Yerma*, *Doña Rosita*, and *Bernarda Alba*, have a profound and pervasive effect on the audience which accounts in part for the longevity and impact of his work. For example, Auriol Smith’s production of *Doña Rosita* at The Orange Tree Theatre in 2004 was ‘a searing drama of lost hope’ according to the British Theatre Guide, whilst Simon Stone’s 2016 adaptation of *Yerma* was described as ‘earth-quaking’ and ‘shattering’ by *The Guardian* and as ‘blistering’, ‘bruis[ing]’, and ‘harrowing’ by the *New York Times*.<sup>1</sup> Although Stone’s version is only loosely based on Lorca’s original play, the agonizing pain of Yerma’s infertility is still a pervasive and powerful force.

Colour affect was also important for my analysis of the repeated puncturing of the male body throughout Lorca’s theatre in Chapter Three. I began by exploring the spilling of male blood and the exsanguination of the male body in *Bodas de sangre* and *Así que pasen*, where redness was a prevalent and labile force. However, when combined with the suffering and grief of the female protagonists in *Bodas de sangre*, this colour bliss segued into the more profound, haunting impact of affective bruising. I continued to explore the effects of the punctum in my analysis of disturbed mental states and the mistreatment of the male body in *Don Perlimplín* and *El público*, particularly Perlimplín’s double identity and the Director’s abuse of the First Man. Through disquieting and violent portrayals of the metaphorical and literal puncturing of the male body, Lorca exposes the troubled mental states of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Phillip Fisher’s review of *Doña Rosita* at The Orange Tree Theatre, *British Theatre Guide*, March-April 2015, <<https://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/donarosita-rev>> [accessed 11 September 2019]; Susannah Clapp, ‘Yerma five-star review – Billie Piper is earth-quaking as Lorca’s heroine’, *The Guardian*, 7 August 2016 <<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/aug/07/yerma-review-young-vic-billie-piper-simon-stone>> [accessed 11 September 2019]; and Ben Brantley, ‘Review: A Blistering Billie Piper Unravels Brilliantly in “Yerma”’, *The New York Times*, 28 March 2018 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/28/theater/yerma-review-billie-piper-lorca.html>> [accessed 11 September 2019].

protagonists. Through the chromatic marking of the male body and the spilling of internal colour, Lorca makes the inner workings of the psyche visible in different ways to *Bernarda Alba*. I discovered that these diverse and powerful portrayals of male and female suffering inscribed upon the body, either literally or metaphorically, stem from rigid and unrelenting moral and social codes constructed around gender. We also saw the oppressive effects of the honour code on women in *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two, and of spinsterhood in *Doña Rosita* in Chapter Four. I argued that the combined effect of this visceral exploration of human suffering is a call for a more fluid approach to gender. This takes the form of a queering of the body through anti-mimetic bodily colour and materials in *El público* and *Así que pasen*. These startling recuperations of colour have a similar effect to the bursts of hued colour against the whitescape in *Bernarda Alba*. Through the pervasive and diverse colours of the body Lorca creates a human ‘poetry’ which ‘grita, llora y se desespera’ by inscribing the inner suffering of these restricted individuals on their very flesh.<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter Four, I probed how Lorca gives poetry physical form: how he uses object colour in the staging, including costumes, sets, lighting, and props, to convey a core poetic image. Having explored the motif of whiteness as the visual representation of the themes of honour and imprisonment and of Bernarda’s mental state in *Bernarda Alba* in Chapter Two, here I turned to the plays *Doña Rosita*, *Mariana Pineda*, and *Don Perlimplín*, which are all guided by an overarching aesthetic vision suggested in the title or subtitle: the *estampa*, the *aleluya*, and the language of flowers respectively. My discussions of object colour in those three plays also led me to consider the role of costume colour in *La zapatera prodigiosa* (1926). In my analysis of *Doña Rosita*, I found important links to my discussion of female emotional pain and of affective bruising in the previous chapter. Through the blending of flowers and flesh in Rosita’s discourse, Lorca uses the body to express her deep-rooted

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<sup>2</sup> *Prosa I*, p. 730. ‘Shouts, cries, and despairs’.

personal suffering. However, unlike *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma*, *Doña Rosita* revealed a greater focus on the materialisation of poetic themes and motifs on the physical stage, namely the mutable rose. Through the colours and styles of Rosita's costumes, the tripartite structure of the play, and the language of flowers, which we see in the recurring mutable rose poem and the 'Lo que dicen las flores' song in Act Two, Lorca uses multiple elements of the performance to bring the mutable rose to life in human form. The lack of redness in Rosita's costumes exposes the dynamic between surface and depth which is central to Lorca's theatre of poetry as her pink and white dresses obscure the vital redness still flowing within her body. The limitations of her gender and her social role as a spinster have denied Rosita the redness promised by the poem. Instead, she becomes a faded version, doomed to a spiritual death.

In *Mariana Pineda*, it is the *estampa* or period print which Lorca animates through colour as we see the central colours of the opening stage directions – the yellow frame and the luminous setting of blue, green, pink, yellow, and sky blue – reflected in Mariana's costumes, the quinces and other objects such as flowers, and the explosion of blissful coloured light as the play comes to a climax. Mariana also provides a visual contrast to the grey, white, and marble colours of the 'lithograph' setting in her *estampa*-yellow dress in Act Two. In Act Three, the opposite is true: Mariana's bleached, lithograph-white costume stands out against the rainbow of *estampa* light. As well as echoing the colour of the *estampa* frame, the implicit yellow quinces are an important example of Lorca's appeal to the sensory imaginary and his creation of an embodied visuality. Inspired by Laura Marks's work on the senses in film, I explored how the audience's memories of past sensory experiences are triggered by representations of sensory experiences on stage. We began to see haptic, gustatory, olfactory, and auditory values in depictions of blood in Chapter Three and of flowers in *Doña Rosita* in that final chapter, but in *Mariana Pineda* the sensory possibilities

of the dialogue are reinforced visually, creating a more concrete representation which is not lost in performance. My analysis of the yellow quinces, which also appear in material form on stage, and of the surreal colour metaphors in Amparo's and Mariana's dialogue, which do not, raised an important question in relation to Lorca's theatre of poetry as a whole: Can we fully appreciate these poetic images and abstract uses of colour in the dialogue if they do not appear on stage? Whilst Elaine Scarry's work on mental re-creation in English literature shows how powerfully colour can be evoked by the reading experience, I argued that in theatre the poetic motifs and metaphors which never take visual form are less impactful due to the transient nature of the spoken word in performance and the need to compete with the concrete presence of the visual elements of the play. Like whiteness in *Bernarda Alba*, the mutable rose in *Doña Rosita*, the *estampa* in this play, and, to some extent, blood in *Bodas de sangre*, these chromatically-charged images reach their full potential when their verbal evocations are mutually complemented physically, and vice versa. For example, Paula Ortiz's film adaptation of *Bodas de sangre*, *La novia* (2015), experiments with bringing the key motifs of the horse, the knife, and the blood to the visual sphere in different ways, such as the horse-patterned zoetrope, the glass dagger which the Bride imagines pierces her abdomen, and the bloodied glass fragments which the Bride imagines coughing up. In contrast, Carlos Saura's re-interpretation of *Bodas de sangre* as a ballet transports Lorca's work to a silent world of physical movement. This is a powerful adaptation of *Bodas de sangre* due to the agency of the body and the choreographed movements, which were important to Lorca, but the ominous images and colours which haunt the play disappear from both the visual and auditory realms and Lorca's theatre of poetry becomes instead an exploration of tensions which is focused on movement.

My exploration of object colour in *Doña Rosita* and *Mariana Pineda* also highlighted the importance of costume colour and characterisation, which I developed further in my



discussions of *Don Perlimplín* and *La zapatera*. Whilst the decolouration of Rosita's and Mariana's bodies and costumes is indicative of one sort of journey, one of exsanguination and death, in *Don Perlimplín* Lorca explores another form of physical transformation through colour: Perlimplín's metamorphosis from a stock *aleluya* figure and a Punch-like puppet to a fully-developed and equivocal character of bones-and-blood. I suggested that this journey is represented by the bold outlines of the green room with its black furniture in the prologue, the flocks of black paper birds, Perlimplín's green frock coat, and the golden antlers, on the one hand, and the red velvet cape and the green emerald dagger, which are the agents of his transformation, on the other. In contrast, in *La zapatera* the Shoemaker's Wife is already a character of bones-and-blood and Lorca uses costume colour to distinguish between her and other, more peripheral characters, like the interchangeable female neighbours and the figure of Don Mirlo. Lorca also uses the colours of the Shoemaker's Wife's dresses – which are described as '*verde rabioso*' in Act One (p. 185) and '*rojo encendido*' in Act Two (p. 215) – to give material form to her fierce temperament and to the 'violence' of the play indicated in the subtitle.<sup>3</sup> As I have shown throughout my thesis, colour is a crucial and underexplored aspect of Lorca's creation of a visceral, material, and holistic theatre of poetry.

Whilst I considered some key performances of Lorca's plays in my thesis, there is further scope for an exploration of what happens to his colour-work in practice through an examination of the rich history of his theatre in performance throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in Spain and across the globe. There is also scope for applying my reading to Lorca's unfinished plays and 'juvenilia', and even his puppet plays and short plays, to see whether these conclusions remain the same or whether the picture changes. I would expect Lorca's preoccupation with theatre of poetry to continue throughout these works, but more varied aesthetic influences would emerge as well as different experiments

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<sup>3</sup> 'Rabid, furious green', 'angry, burning red'.

with creating poetry in material form. A re-reading of colour in Lorca's prodigious and diverse poetic corpus would also be timely, particularly in light of these ideas of 'poetry' as a visceral portrayal of human suffering and a powerful emotive and material force. A consideration of Lorca's poetry in terms of the role of colour in mental re-creation, the affective power of his startling and often surreal colour images and metaphors, and his use of implicit object colour would offer a fuller understanding of his poetic colour-writing which moves away from a purely symbolic reading. For example, Lorca's famous exploration of green in 'Romance sonámbulo' (1927) is not only a playful and complex equivocation of 'green' as a proper noun and as an adjective, as Francisco García Lorca suggests, but a portrayal focused on the colouration of abstract nouns (the wind) and the female body (green flesh and green hair) which merits new critical attention. Lorca's poetry collection *Poeta en Nueva York* (1929) also calls urgently for a fresh critical reading of its colour recuperations, particularly the pervasive presence of blood and abstract colour metaphors and its powerful evocations of urban materiality, nature, and human suffering. For example, 'Nueva York: Oficina y denuncia' [New York: Office and Denunciation], is replete with references to animal blood as Lorca laments the sacrifice of the natural world to the concrete metropolis as the city is fed by 'los interminables trenes de leche' and 'los interminables trenes de sangre' (p. 281), with all the implicit colours which these fluids imply.<sup>4</sup> In 'Norma y paraíso de los negros' [Rules and Paradise of Black People] it is blue as well as racial blackness that takes centre stage, as blue is anthropomorphised and invested with tactile properties; it is '[un] azul sin historia' and 'un azul crujiente' (p. 251).<sup>5</sup> These few examples in one collection highlight the possibilities for extending my reading of colour to Lorca's poetry.

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<sup>4</sup> Federico García Lorca, 'Nueva York: Oficina y denuncia' in *Poeta en Nueva York* [1930] in *Obra Completa III*, ed. by Miguel García-Posada (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2008). 'The never-ending trains of milk', 'the never-ending trains of blood'.

<sup>5</sup> Federico García Lorca, 'Norma y paraíso de los negros', in *Poeta en Nueva York*. 'A blue without a history', 'A crunchy blue'.

Within Hispanic studies, my thesis offers new ways of tackling the colour practice of other early-twentieth-century Hispanic playwrights, including Ramon del Valle-Inclán's exploration of the *esperpento* in *Luces de bohemia* [Bohemian Lights] (1920) and *Martes de carnaval* [Carnival Tuesday] (1930).<sup>6</sup> My reading of colour in Lorca's theatre also has wider implications for theatre studies as a whole, especially my exploration of the difference between visual and verbal colour and how the two interact in performance, the affective impact of colour on the audience, the ways in which colour can be used to unite or create contrasts between the different elements of the staging, and the possibilities of bringing the characters' mental states and key themes and images in the dialogue to the stage in physical form through colour. These ideas are especially important when we consider the role of colour in the experimental theatre which was developing in the early twentieth century, including Wassily Kandinsky's *The Yellow Sound* (1912).<sup>7</sup> There were also important ideas surrounding colour and the stage emerging in Italian Futurism, as Günter Berghaus explores in his study.<sup>8</sup> A research project which took into account the diverse chromatic landscape of theatre in early-twentieth-century Europe as a whole would be a useful addition to modern language studies. The ideas of affective and material colour explored in my thesis could also shed further light on colour in Hispanic poetry, especially Rubén Darío's *Azul...* (1888)

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<sup>6</sup> Like Lorca, Valle-Inclán sought to renovate the stultified, bourgeois Spanish stage and expose the truth beneath the surface of things. The 'esperpento' acted as a distorting mirror, creating a grotesque portrayal of reality. The RAE defines Valle-Inclán's concept as '[un] género literario [...] en el que se deforma la realidad, recargando sus rasgos grotescos, sometiéndola a una elaboración muy personal el lenguaje coloquial y desgarrado'. 'A literary genre [...] in which reality becomes deformed, its grotesque features are exaggerated, and it is submitted to a very personal creation of colloquial and fragmented language'.

<sup>7</sup> See Birgit Haas, 'Staging Colours: Edward Gordon Craig and Wassily Kandinsky', in *Textual Intersections: Literature, History and the Arts in Nineteenth-century Europe*, ed. by Rachael Langford (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 41–51; Geraint D'Arcy and Richard J. Hand, 'Open Your Eyes / Shut Your Eyes: Staging Kandinsky's *The Yellow Sound* at Tate Modern', *Performance Research*, 17:5 (2012) 56–60; and Günter Berghaus, 'A Theatre of Image, Sound and Motion: On Synaesthesia and the Idea of a Total Work of Art', *Maske und Kothurn*, 32.1-2 (1986), 7–28, which also focuses on the work of Enrico Prampolini.

<sup>8</sup> See Günter Berghaus, *Italian Futurist Theatre, 1909-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 253–59, p. 300, pp. 347–57, and pp. 431–39. Berghaus discusses Gina and Corro's idea of a 'chromatic drama' (1910); Fortunato Depero's abstract play *Colours* (1916); Giacomo Balla's *Colour Manifest* (1918), which promoted an explosive, startling use of colour and his ballet *Fireworks* (1914), which was inspired by 'chromatic drama'; Achille Ricciardi's *The Theatre of Colour* (1913, pub. 1919), which promoted the synaesthetic mingling of colour and sound; and Filia's play *Mechanical Sensuality* (1926/1927).

[Blue] and ‘Sinfonía en gris mayor’ (1896) [Symphony in Grey Major], José Asunción Silva’s *El libro de versos* (1923) [Book of Verses], and Rafael Alberti’s *A la pintura (poema del color y de la línea)* (1945-1976) [To Painting (Poem of Colour and Line)]. Whilst Rosemary Lo Dato touches briefly on colour in her analysis of gems in Valle-Inclán’s, Darío’s, and Asunción Silva’s writing in her 1999 study, there is scope for a study of these writers’ colour-work in its own right, including Valle-Inclán’s prose writing, as José Manuel Pereiro Otero has begun to explore.<sup>9</sup> The implications of my colour study also reach beyond my temporal framework of 1920 to 1936 and provide a fruitful approach for looking at colour in other periods, such as the Golden Age. More broadly, my study demonstrates how other areas of arts and humanities research and modern language research – both literary and visual – can nourish Hispanic studies in ways which are mutually beneficial and emphasise the inherently cross-disciplinary nature of both modern language studies and colour studies.

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<sup>9</sup> See Rosemary C. Lo Dato, *Beyond The Glitter: The Language of Gems in Modernista Writers Rubén Darío, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, and José Asunción Silva* (Lewisburg, NY and London: Bucknell University Press, Associated University Presses, 1999), and Pereiro Otero, *La escritura modernista de Valle-Inclán*.

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